THE POWER OF TRADE: UPGRADE-FOCUSED PREFIGURATIVE TRADING PROJECTS AS A TOOL FOR EQUALISING TRADE RELATIONS ACROSS COLONIAL DIVIDES

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Statement of Originality

I, Sofia Persdotter Gradin, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below.

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Abstract

To counteract the colonial division of labour and equalise trade relations across the global North and South, Global Value Chains (GVC) analysts have advocated value chain upgrade. Such upgrade would entail a much-needed financial improvement for Southern producers. Rather than turning to governments and IGOs, GVC analysts have generally addressed their policy suggestions to firms directly. There is an idea that firms can actively disentangle and disrupt prevalent hierarchies in their own activities. This thesis looks closer at prefigurative politics as a political strategy and asks: are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides? Can individual firms disentangle colonial inequalities in trade?

As marxists and decolonial theorists have argued, global trade inequalities are about more than money: economic relations are inherently political. The 'value' in Global Value Chains should be understood not only as return on investment or profit, but also as something broader, a question of what makes a good life and a balanced division of work in society. GVC analysis has hitherto paid insufficient attention to these insights. As a remedy this thesis proposes the addition of a new concept to the GVC toolbox, 'voice upgrade', i.e. an improvement of the ability of all actors in the chain to speak and listen about the political questions of value.

Two case studies are used to ground the discussion: firstly, the trading of coffee from the Zapatistas in Mexico to Café Libertad in Germany. Secondly, the export of spice blends and sauces from the Western Cape of South Africa via the firm Turqle. These prefigurative projects both subvert and reproduce prevailing hierarchies. Importantly, while the former is possible, it requires deliberate facilitation.

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List of Acronyms

AGHA - Anarchosyndikalistische Gruppe Hamburg-Altona (Anarcho-syndicalist Group of Hamburg-Altona)

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BANPAZ - Banco Popular Autónomo Zapatista (Popular Autonomous Zapatista Bank)

BANAMAZ - Banco Autónomo de las Mujeres Autoridades Zapatistas (Autonomous Bank of the Women in the Zapatista Authorities)

BRC - British Retail Consortium

CERTIMEX - Certificadora Mexicana de Productos y Procesos Ecológicos (Mexican Certification of Organic Products and Processes)

DSTV - Digital Satellite Television

EU - European Union

EZLN - Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)

FLO - Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International

FOB - Free on Board

GBP - Great Britain Pound

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GPN - Global Production Network

GVC - Global Value Chain

HACCP - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points

HDR - Human Development Report

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IFI - International Financial Institution

IGO - Inter-Governmental Organisation

ILO - International Labour Organisation

IMF - International Monetary Fund

IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Networks, United Nations

ISI - Import-Substituting Industrialisation

ISO - International Organisation for Standardisation

IT - Information Technology

JBG - Junta de Buen Gobierno (Good Governance Council)

LAFTA - Latin American Free Trade Agreement

MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology

NAFTA - North American Free Trade Agreement

NCVO - National Council for Voluntary Organisations

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

PRSP - Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

SAIH - Studentenes og Akademikerenes Internasjonale Hjelpefond (The Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund)

SAIRR - South African Institute of Race Relations

SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme

SIPaz - Servicio Internacional para la Paz (International Service for Peace)

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

US - United States (of America)

USD - United States Dollar

WFTO - World Fair Trade Organisation

WTO - World Trade Organisation

ZAR - Zuid-Afrikaanse Rand (South African Rand)

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Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis addresses the broader topic of global inequality and people's struggles against it. The disciplines of Development Studies and Political Economy have long aimed to understand why some people in the world face starvation and neglect, while others hold an excess of material resources and political influence. These questions are broad and intricate – far too broad for any single PhD thesis to cover in their entirety. This thesis therefore focuses on a narrower topic, namely the role of global trade relations in perpetuating global (in)equalities. Trade relations across the global North and South are widely regarded as a key contributor to global inequalities, and an arena characterised by hierarchy and neocolonialism (Dicken 2015; Pogge 2008). This thesis explores ways in which trade relations can be made more egalitarian and mutually beneficial for all who are involved.

In this introductory chapter I will start by laying out the purpose of this research project, further detailing its focus and remit. We will see that this thesis focuses on trade relations – even further delimited by an empirical focus on two case studies – and that like any research project it starts from certain academic and political assumptions. The second task of this chapter is to clarify what is original about this thesis and how this research makes a new contribution. In section 1-2. I show that little – if any – previous research has studied trading projects that are both radical and prefigurative, and that seek upgrade in global value chains. Section 1-3. summarises my main argument in brief terms and section 1-4. outlines the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

1-1. PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS

> Two kinds of theory correspond to the two kinds of time. There is problem-solving theory which takes the present as given and reasons about how to deal with particular problems within the existing order of things. Then there is what, for want of a better term, I shall call critical theory. Critical theory stands back from the existing order of things to ask how that order came into being, how it may be changing, and how that change may be influenced or channeled.
> (Cox 1996: 525)

Much research into Political Economy has sought to solve problems within the parameters of capitalism and modernity. Academics and NGO researchers often point to

necessary reforms in global economic institutions: democratise global governance; get the IMF and World Bank to support developing countries in increasing public spending and economic regulation; increase strategic aid donations; let developed governments pay for climate change adaptation in developing regions (e.g. Chang 2007; Stiglitz 2002; Oxfam 2002). These measures deal with particular problems within the existing order of things. Problem-solving approaches such as these are often acidly referred to as 'rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic': instead of dealing with fundamental problems they tinker with details (see e.g. Snyder 2003: 349; Coates 2015: 23; Internationalist Perspective 2010). To a critical theorist, the deckchair metaphor is both a good and a bad one. It is a good metaphor in that it certainly is questionable how problem-solving and rearranging details is going to change the fundamental inequalities of modernity and capitalism. It is a bad metaphor, however, in that problem-solving and amelioration is important both in the short-term and as an end in itself. Removing a deck chair from blocking an exit route may not stop the sinking of the Titanic, but it may save lives. By taking a critical stance in this thesis, thus, I do not wish to imply that problem-solving is reprehensible or unnecessary. This thesis aims merely to add to a very specific corner of the debate around inequalities in world trade – it must not be read as the final or conclusive study on the topic.

Much like the sinking of the Titanic has become a light-hearted and facetious reference point in Anglo-American culture (especially after the 1997 Hollywood film and ensuing spoofs), but was in actual fact a frightening and heinous tragedy, global poverty and development have also become somewhat blasé in mainstream discourse (SAIH 2015). For academics who study the topic every day it is at times difficult to remember how high the stakes are. Poverty kills about 18 million people every year, a third of all human deaths (Pogge 2008: 2). Over 1.5 billion human beings live in 'multidimensional' poverty, that is, lacking access to health care, education, and a decent standard of living (HDR 2014). Three quarters of these people live in South Asia or Africa. Around one billion people are chronically malnourished, which means that they cannot get hold of enough food that contains the vitamins and minerals needed to sustain a healthy body (HDR 2010). 89% of malnourished people are in Asia, the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa, while 1% of malnourished people live in 'developed' countries (Ibid.). Since the 16th century, European corporations and nation-states have colonised regions outside Europe, sometimes appropriating land for settlement, but more often appropriating people as slaves, and resources and produce as loot or cheap imports (Pakenham 1992; Chomsky 2000; Dicken 2015). Modern-capitalist values, Western-style gender norms and categories, and a notion of 'race' that emphasises skin tone and places white Europeans at the top of a hierarchy, have made a notable impact in all countries, and in some cases outside Europe replaced or repressed previously held values, norms, categories or

organisational models to the extent that Europe, and more recently the United States of America, are widely considered both culturally and economically hegemonic (Stoler 1989; Schiwy 2007; Nederveen Pieterse 2003).

Speaking of global inequalities and poverty in the abstract requires perhaps too many simplifications and generalisations, when in fact the expressions of inequality and poverty are as multiple and complex as their causes. This thesis focuses its lens on world trade relations and asks how and to what extent trade of products from the global South to the global North can be egalitarian as opposed to hierarchical, and what role the carrying out of egalitarian trade in the here and now could have in a radical social movement aiming to equalise relations between global South and North. My core research question is: *Are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides?*

'Prefigurative' and 'upgrade' are two concepts that I will elaborate upon, especially in chapters 7 and 6, which are dedicated to each respectively. By way of introduction we can note that 'upgrade' refers to the improvement of the situation of people and/or businesses that are based in the global South (Ponte and Ewert 2009: 1637). This concept is connected to Global Value Chains (GVC) analysis in particular, as will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. As we will see in subsequent chapters, upgrade can take the form of increased earnings, but also improved working conditions, and furthermore – I argue – increased say in decision-making. 'Prefigurative', meanwhile, refers to a political strategy that intentionally attempts, as far as possible, to enact desired political ideals in the here and now (Cornell 2011). Whereas stereotypical images of radical left political activism revolve around protesting, petitioning and striking, I argue following existing theory on prefigurativism that activism also occurs through the creation of alternative institutions, relations etc that prefigure desired ideals. 'Prefigurative upgrade projects' are thus projects aiming to improve the situation of people and/or businesses in the global South through carrying out upgrade-focused trade right now.

Rather than speaking about these issues only in the abstract I have chosen to ground the discussion in two particular case studies. The first is the trading relationship between the Zapatistas in rural Mexico and the anticapitalist collective Café Libertad in urban Germany, which is one of the traders who import Zapatista coffee into Europe. The second case study is the South African exporting company Turqle, which is based in central Cape Town and supports businesses in the surrounding region to export shelf-ready cupboard food products to Europe. I focus on two of Turqle's suppliers, Bomvu and Luhlaza, who have both worked with Turqle since its inception. Approaching the

topic through these two case studies allows for a grounded and contextualised discussion which also, especially in later chapters, has relevance on a more general level.

As will already be clear, I take my ideological starting point in the radical left, marxism and anarchism. In my discussion I have already mentioned egalitarianism, which is usually listed as a core value of the left (see e.g. Dworkin 2002; Wilson 2014) – though almost all ideologies lay claim to the term (Ibid.; Vincent 2010). Egalitarian is a vague and ambiguous concept – it might refer to the idea that people should have the same or similar opportunities in life, or the same outcomes, or that everybody should be given the same amount of concern or regard by the rest of society (Dworkin 2002). The exact meaning of the concept of equality in the abstract is hotly disputed, but as we will see in subsequent chapters, the two cases studied in this thesis aim for relations in which all individuals are equivalent to each other, though disparities in individuals' skills and experience conflict with this occasionally. Marxists, anarchists and other leftist actors generally have a more ambitious interpretation of equality than liberals, conservatives or fascists and tend to prioritise this value very highly (Dworkin 2002; Wilson 2014; Vincent 2010). These abstract reflections make more sense in subsequent chapters, where we will see that our cases aim – to mixed success – to replace capitalist, colonial and patriarchal divisions of labour and values (which are hierarchical) with relations guided by egalitarian principles.

That my ideological starting point is 'radical' refers to the notion that *fundamental* social change is welcomed – this is, change to the root (which in Latin is called 'radix') of social relations, as opposed to, or as well as, changes only to the contents or details within given models (Day 2005: 4; Cox 1996: 525). Richard Day provides a rather useful description of the notion of radical politics, worth quoting in full:

> By radical activism I mean conscious attempts to alter, impede, destroy or construct alternatives to dominant structures, processes, practices and identities. My focus is quite literally those struggles that seek change to the root, that want to address not just the content of current modes of domination and exploitation, but also the forms that give rise to them. Thus, for example, rather than seeking pay equity for men and women, a radical feminism works for the elimination of patriarchy in all of its forms; rather than seeking self-government within a settler state, a radical indigenous politics challenges the European notion of sovereignty upon which the system is states is constructed.
> (Day 2005: 4)

Radical egalitarianism could be described as the normative view that a just society can be achieved only through *fundamental* social and political change and that introducing or

adjusting specific laws that regulate capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy is not sufficient for achieving this aim. Radicalism can thus be understood in contrast to 'problem-solving' strategies as described above – though the two are not mutually exclusive.

Radicalism is a reversal of the conservative view that social change must be gradual so as not to break the 'chain of continuity' in society or 'commit waste on [our] inheritance' (Burke 2012 [1790]). That I and my case studies welcome radical egalitarian trading relations thus implies a welcoming attitude to forms of trading and underlying values that are altogether different from capitalist forms of production, patriarchal ideas and categories of gender, and other predominant social arrangements built on hierarchy.

The purpose of the thesis can be summarised as threefold: firstly I aim, like the author of any PhD thesis, to add to the academic knowledge on my topic. In this case, existing knowledge on the topic at hand is very scarce, making this a particularly valid aim in itself. As I will show in the next section, studies of radical and prefigurative trading projects aiming for upgrade have been all but nonexistent prior to this project. The potential of radical prefigurative trading projects in challenging the hierarchical divisions of world trade has therefore gone unstudied and ignored.

Secondly, as I explain in chapter 3, I have the political-epistemological aim of breaking apart the construction of modern scientific knowledge as the totality of human knowledge (Mignolo 2007). Mignolo and others point to the role of science in constructing certain knowledge as correct (for example, the knowledge that economic relations are or must be capitalist) and other knowledge as unthinkable or unscientific (for example, knowledge of non-capitalist economies) – a construction that justifies prevailing power relations (Ibid.; Zein-Elabdin 2004). I aim to show that 'other' forms of economy exist. Thirdly, I have a political aim that stretches outside of academia, of furthering social movement struggles against hierarchy and poverty, and for radically egalitarian trade.

1-2. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

The topic of counteracting world trade inequalities has been handled by many academics in the past, but this thesis takes an approach that differs from most of them. I combine three core elements: I take a critical, or as I prefer to call it *radical*, view; I focus on *prefigurative* activism; and I focus on what GVC analysts call *upgrade*. Few, if any, studies have approached this topic from this particular angle before. As we will see, this

perspective enables certain insights to emerge that have previously been ignored. Most notably, my radical critique of capitalist economic assumptions sheds new light on the GVC notion of upgrade and leads to my introduction of the novel concept of 'voice upgrade'. Furthermore, my interpretation of certain trade relations as prefigurative opens for new considerations of the relationship between conforming to conventional economic patterns and breaking with them, in the context of global value chains.

The GVC literature has studied upgrade since the mid 1990s, but this literature has for the most part been problem-solving rather than critical or radical, as I show in chapter 6. For example, the Capturing the Gains research project, one of the largest GVC analysis projects in recent years, has opted for introducing the concept of 'social upgrade' as a means to ameliorate the bad working conditions suffered by workers, rather than questioning the desirability of capitalist relations of production altogether (Barrientos et al 2011). Most other GVC analysis studies recommend the introduction of new global institutions or regulations – or simply suggest ways for individual firms in the global South to improve their position in the value chain, rather than rethinking the fundamental rules of capitalism or other oppressive conventions in society (e.g. Daviron and Ponte 2005; Mitchell and Coles 2011). This is not to imply that problem-solving GVC analysis research is not worthwhile, but my study renders visible some key insights that these previous studies have not, as will become evident in the below chapters.

To study what we could call prefigurative trading is thus not in itself unprecedented. Aside from GVC analysis, another literature that studies the influence of alternative trading practices on international development – but in an entirely different way than this thesis – is literature on the Fairtrade movement. This literature predominantly focuses on the activities, politics and impacts of the Fairtrade International certification (symbolised by the green and blue circle against a black background depicting a stylised waving farmer, which most of us are familiar with). Notably, the cases studied in this thesis are not politically aligned with Fairtrade International (though Turqle certify some products for marketing purposes) and are not studied in relation to that certification. Neither the Fairtrade literature nor the objects of its research could for the most part be described as radical or critical (see e.g. Nicholls and Opal 2005; Murray and Raynolds 2007). There are indeed critical and progressive voices within this literature (Reed 2009; Barrientos and Smith 2007; Davies et al 2010). Like the rest of the Fairtrade literature, however, these studies do not focus on upgrade or the colonial division of labour. Insights from the GVC literature have begun to make their mark in the Fairtrade literature and the Fairtrade movement itself in very recent years – for example, the Fairtrade Foundation's Chief Executive explicitly mentioned the term 'value chain' and described a case of functional upgrade – though the latter term was not used explicitly –

in his foreword to the Foundation's Strategic Mission 2013-15 (Fairtrade Foundation 2013: 4). Some Fairtrade evaluation and impact studies have pointed to the importance of 'capacity building' – a concept that in some interpretations overlaps with GVC's 'upgrade' (Sutton 2012; Raynolds, Murray and Taylor 2004), though the explicit links to GVC analysis have been weak. From the GVC side there have been several studies on the impact of Fairtrade certification on economic and social upgrade (e.g. Kaplinsky 2010; Taylor 2005; Valkila et al 2010). Importantly, however, these have not addressed radical egalitarian prefigurative trade.

A strand of literature that has treated radical activism that seeks to equalise world trade relations is the (New) Social Movement literature, which has featured many studies on protest movements, activist groups and protest camps (Pleyers 2011; Sklair 1995; Smith 2001). These are in most cases critical rather than problem-solving, but the vast majority deal with what I, following Day (2005), call 'politics of demand' – in other words, activism aimed at changing government and IGO behaviour, rather than prefigurative activism. There is a small but growing literature on prefigurative politics emerging out of Social Movement Studies, but few studies – if any – before this one have focused specifically on *radical* and *prefigurative* trading projects seeking *upgrade* in global value chains.

Decolonial and critical theorists have long pointed to the potential of radical social movements, as an alternative to watered down mainstream development NGOs and neoliberal IMF and World Bank programmes, to lift the global South out of poverty sustainably (e.g. Escobar 2004; Hoogvelt 2001; Omvedt 1994). Escobar asks:

> [W]hat are the sites where ideas for these alternative and dissenting imaginations will come from? Second, how are the dissenting imaginations to be set into motion? I suggest that one possible, and perhaps privileged, way in which these two questions can be answered is by focusing on the politics of difference enacted by many contemporary social movements, particularly those that more directly and simultaneously engage with imperial globality and global coloniality. […] [A]nti-globalisation movements […] offer perhaps our best hope of imagining 'worlds and knowledges otherwise'
> (Escobar 2004: 220-221)

Many have heeded this call for research on decolonial social movements, including Escobar himself, but few studies have looked at prefigurative upgrading projects operating across colonial divides specifically. This thesis offers both theoretical insight and new empirical research that contributes to an understanding of how and in what sense 'dissenting imaginations [can] be set into motion' in social movements (Ibid.)

Theoretically, I combine political radicalism with ontological capillarity (i.e. the idea that power is dispersed throughout society rather than emanating exclusively from a central institution or relation) and pluriversalism (i.e. the idea that a concept or social relation can simultaneously have many different meanings, expressions and forms – for example, 'economy' may take other forms than capitalism, and 'oppression' may take other forms than class), as well as with a critical reading of the colonial division of labour (the global trend by which ex-colonies carry out tasks in the production chain that are less lucrative, while ex-colonising nations carry out tasks that are more so) and what I call the colonial matrix of power (a heuristic device for understanding how different oppressive patterns co-create power relations, which I expand upon in chapter 3). These terms will be further developed in the next few chapters.

As well as drawing together these theoretical fields, I offer new empirical research on contemporary prefigurative upgrading projects. Members of all the organisations at which I carried out fieldwork (Turqle, Bomvu, Luhlaza and Café Libertad) told me they had previously been the subject of some academic research, whether by postgraduate students or professional researchers, but, unsurprisingly, nobody had studied them from an angle resembling that of this project.

I am not claiming to be able to speak on behalf of my case studies in any unbiassed manner. My personal and professional perspective on this topic has contributed to my research focus and interests. As a scholar based in the global North I went into this research project being primarily interested in how Northerners can change their behaviour in order to promote egalitarian relations with the rest of the world. During the course of this project this focus widened significantly, but the empirical emphasis is still to some degree on Northern actors. This is not only a result of practical circumstances: as I clarify in chapter 3, this research project takes its departure from an interpretation of the ontology of power that is, among other things, capillary, i.e. dispersed across society rather than exclusively centralised in elite institutions. Rather than approaching this topic asking what the oppressed can do to overturn their oppression – a more frequently asked and equally important question (e.g. Freire 1970) – I have placed the onus somewhat on the privileged Northern actors in this project. If the capillary view of power is correct, then radical social change can only be achieved through the co-operation of all social classes and groups.

1-3. MAIN ARGUMENT

To summarise the central argument of this thesis in very brief terms, I hold that the case

study organisations are indeed a successful tool for equalising trade relations in some respects: by achieving greater financial earnings for the Southern producers; by improving working and living conditions for workers and to some extent wider populations; by, at least in one of my two case studies, increasing the political say of Southern producers. In other respects the success of these organisations is severely limited: deeper political discussions across the Northern and the Southern actor are almost absent in both cases; decision-making is not always as inclusive and participatory as it promises to be; the running of egalitarian businesses often necessitates being heavily involved in hierarchical and exploitative economies. In addition, prefigurativism, like any political strategy, can deliver only partial and limited success, both in terms of the extent to which it can break with conventional hierarchies in any given situation, and in terms of the population it can reach.

Let us flesh out this summary somewhat and relate it to the specific concepts I use in this thesis. I am concerned with the potential for prefigurative upgrade projects – with particular reference to my two case studies – to equalise trade relations across colonial divides. Like any research project I start from certain ontological assumptions, namely that power, firstly, is dispersed throughout society rather than being entirely centralised in elite institutions, and secondly, operates according to more than one logic (I focus on three: colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism). From this starting point I answer the research question (*Are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides?*) by dividing it into two constituent parts: what measures can and do my two case studies take in order to equalise trade relations across colonial divides; and to what extent is their prefigurativism successful? In answer to the first question I find that my case study organisations, in their different ways, implement what GVC analysts have called economic upgrade (shifting value-added, i.e. return on investment, to the South) and social upgrade (i.e. improving workers' conditions and prospects for the future). Further to this I suggest that 'voice upgrade' (i.e. improving the ability of workers to speak and listen within and across firms about value) is a key measure – a measure that GVC analysis has not hitherto paid attention to, and one at which my case study organisations have largely lacked success. I use the concept of value to illustrate how economic concerns are inseparable from social or cultural ones; value is not primarily a technical economic term, but a site of political struggle. In answer to the second question, disentanglement of, i.e. breaking with, the colonial matrix of power is almost always accompanied by continued entanglement, i.e. continued connection and interdependence, which should be seen as a strength as well as a limitation of prefigurative political action. The trading carried out by the organisations studied here constitutes significant alternatives to conventional trading, but also remains attainable and relevant to the rest of the population. Importantly, their prefigurative trading aims

not to create a universal revolution that would liberate everybody in society or establish any new social hegemony, but to untie the knots of the colonial matrix where they appear.

1-4. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following chapters have been structured to methodically address the research question. Chapter 2 is my literature review chapter. Here I outline and discuss some of the most influential literatures that have attempted to explain inequalities in global economic relations. Neoliberal economics continues to see inequalities as inevitable given what neoliberals perceive as the realities of life; even as positive since inequalities incentivise people to undertake laborious tasks (Rawls 1985; Hayek 1960). Capitalist economic models, favouring competition, self-interest and individualism, create and amplify rather than counteract inequalities. I discuss and critique some of the building blocks of neoliberal economics. Understanding this school of thought is key to understanding global economic relations since neoliberalism has been so influential in recent decades (Wade 2003; Harvey 2005). I then turn to a second type of explanation, one that focuses more specifically on inequalities between the global South and North. I discuss dependency theory and related theories, as well as GVC analysis, which I argue should be understood as one of its descendants. These theories point to the lasting influence of colonial practices that have placed most people in colonised regions on a 'low road', exporting low value-added products and finding it difficult to upgrade to more lucrative production. GVC analysis serves as the main theoretical influence of this thesis, and is also the main object of my constructive critique.

In chapter 3 I outline my analytical approach and methodology. The first and longest section of this chapter introduces my theoretical framework, with particular focus on the ontology of power (and thus equality/inequality). I ground my ontology in two main ideas: firstly, rather than seeing power relations as emanating from any central institution or group, I take Foucault's view of power as capillary. Power saturates all of society and constitutes all our actions (Foucault 1983). Secondly, rather than seeing power as operating according to a single logic or social relation, I take the view that several different logics co-constitute power relations in society. As a heuristic device, I stylise the complex workings of power in global trading relations along three axes: capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. These could simplistically be understood to comprise what decolonial scholars have called a colonial matrix of power. As we will see throughout the thesis, this ontological starting point significantly influences my argument concerning what inequality is and what activists can do to challenge it.

Notably, it leads to an understanding of trading relations that is more than 'economic': counteracting hierarchical gendered and colonial relations become as important in equalising trade as replacing capitalist relations of production with egalitarian ones. In this chapter I apply my ontological logics to the concept of value, which sits at the heart of this thesis. Value is a concept that particularly highlights the ways in which 'economics' is inseparable from broader social concerns and human relations of power. In addition to rejecting econocentrism, a capillary and plurilogical view of power leads to different political strategies than a centristic or universal view. Rather than leading activists to take state power or create a new hegemony, this view necessitates capillary action and prefigurative politics; the ubiquitous disentanglement of (i.e breaking with, and therefore also breaking) the colonial matrix of power.

In the second part of chapter 3 I outline my empirical methodology. Since my ontological starting point is a capillary and plurilogical interpretation of power I have chosen to focus on qualitative rather than quantitative methods, interviewing and observing my two case studies and studying policy documents produced by and about them. I also use secondary literature, especially when discussing the Zapatistas since I have not visited Chiapas in person; the costs to the Zapatistas and the environment would have been too great to justify the minimal insight I, as one of the hordes of Western researchers interested in the Zapatistas, could conceivably have gained. Instead I use research produced by the Zapatistas themselves, as well as existing independent studies.

Chapter 4 outlines and discusses my first case study, the trade of coffee between the Zapatistas and Café Libertad. The Zapatistas are a community of around 250,000 people in the South-East of Mexico. Through an armed uprising in 1994, with a low-intensity conflict continuing to this day, the Zapatistas have gained autonomy from the Mexican government and no longer receive any government money or provisions, nor pay taxes or follow Mexican laws (Holloway and Peláez 1998). This uprising was a response to policies and behaviour by the Mexican government that the Zapatistas perceived as directly or indirectly violent, pushing indigenous populations into abject poverty and landlessness. Selling coffee beans is one of the few external sources of income for the Zapatistas. The anarcho-syndicalist collective Café Libertad in Hamburg, Germany, was set up in 1999 to import Zapatista coffee to Europe and thus support their struggle both financially and politically (Café Libertad 2015). This chapter first assesses the ways in which this case study remains entangled in the colonial matrix of power – then the ways in which it disentangles the matrix. This structure reflects my overall argument that prefigurative politics exists in constant tension between entanglement (the status quo) and disentanglement (a genuine departure from and challenge to the status quo).

Chapter 5 addresses the second case study in a similar fashion. Turqle is a small collective of 4 individuals working in an affluent part of Cape Town, supporting a range of companies in the poorer rural Western Cape region to export sauces and spice blends to Europe (and to a lesser extent Australia and the rest of South Africa). I focus on two of their suppliers, Bomvu and Luhlaza, which were both unable to export shelf-ready produce to Europe before they started working with Turqle. As well as providing advice, product development, monitoring and other export-support services to their supplier companies, Turqle supports the workers of those companies directly by providing free education and training to them, and paying towards their children's school fees and further education. Turqle is one of extremely few companies in the global North who actively promote what GVC analysts call functional, process and product upgrade, as well as social upgrade, for their Southern suppliers – though Turqle does not use those terms or make use of GVC literature specifically. As in the previous chapter, I outline the ways in which Turqle and their suppliers remain anchored in the colonial matrix of power, and the ways in which they have managed to break with it.

In chapters 6 and 7 I compare and contrast my case studies. Chapter 6 critiques the economism of GVC analysis when it comes to the notions of upgrade. Economic upgrade has largely referred to an increase in the profitability or return on investment of Southern firms (Gereffi et al 2001). More recently GVC analysts have also been interested in 'social upgrade', that is, improvements in the working conditions and living standards of workers (Barrientos et al 2011). Both of these forms of upgrade are important – though, I argue, the distinction between the two is artificial and results from a capitalist organisation of production. The capitalist business form, in addition, gives an exploitative meaning to the notion of value, as we saw in chapter 3. When businesses are capitalist, economic upgrade amounts to increased exploitation of workers, which can hardly be seen as a move in a more egalitarian direction. Replacing capitalist forms of production with more egalitarian organisational models (for example worker-owned co-operatives) disposes of the distinction between economic and social upgrade, and brings out other values than profitability and competition.

Furthermore, I argue that upgrade must also take place in the political arena, which is why I introduce the notion of upgrade as voice, i.e. upgrade as increased ability to speak, be heard and listen in formal and informal decision-making, both within and across firms. The notion of voice upgrade is my proposed innovation to GVC analysis, seeking to integrate insights from decolonial theory – especially the critique of economism – into its framework. This notion would facilitate not only a critique of the capitalist business form, but also other hierarchical and exclusionary forms of organisation, such as patriarchal and colonial ones (i.e. for example production that remunerates only work

traditionally carried out by men, or production based on a colonial global division of labour, respectively). What 'voice upgrade' is especially well-placed to do is to open up conversations and struggles about values: what is a just organisation of production?

Both case studies have achieved economic as well as social upgrade for Southern producers in their own and contrasting ways. Turqle works with capitalist suppliers and has contributed to their functional, process and product upgrade, while improving working conditions for their workers and providing training and education. The Zapatistas, meanwhile, through their relationship with Café Libertad receive higher and more stable prices for their coffee than in conventional markets. Since the Zapatistas (like Café Libertad) are largely non-capitalist, and therefore for the most part lack capitalist exploitation, this economic upgrade generally leads to social upgrade automatically since what benefits the firm directly benefits its worker-owners. When it comes to upgrade as voice, both cases leave something to be desired as conversations within, and to an even greater extent between, these actors are problematic and/or dysfunctional. Both Zapatista coffee farmers and workers at Turqle's suppliers appear to be using what James C. Scott has called 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott 1985) – that is, disengagement or disinterest – to express reservations about Café Libertad's and Turqle's activities.

Chapter 7 compares and contrasts my case studies, but unlike chapter 6 it focuses on the second aspect of the research question: what might 'a successful tool' for equalising trade relations be in this context? The chapter starts with a comparison of the challenges our case study organisations meet in their pursuit of disentanglement of the colonial matrix. My argument in this chapter, however, also stresses the importance of remaining entangled in the matrix; hence I consider some of the challenges in remaining so. Entanglement is difficult to avoid – true disentanglement would require a complete disconnection from society, which is desirable and achievable for few. Furthermore, entanglement is also an insurance of the relevance of disentanglement to the rest of society: though a complete dropping-out of the colonial matrix challenges the latter by proving that other desirable worlds and ways of being are possible (despite claims by colonists and neoliberal elites to the contrary), the political influence of disentanglement on the matrix itself is greater when others can join, support, interact with and communicate with those who disentangle. In this chapter I also address common misconceptions and critiques of prefigurativism as a social movement strategy. As I outline in chapter 3, prefigurativism is connected to a capillary understanding of power and therefore does not aim for a universal or simultaneous revolution of social and economic relations. The equalisation of trading relations which the research question asks for, thus, are seen by prefigurativists as specific and finite; local but not insular or

isolationist.

In both case studies, achieving trading relations that constitute a significant break with the colonial matrix is more challenging than remaining entangled within it. This might seem a trivial and predictable observation, but the data from my case studies show that surviving economically as a non-capitalist trader is far less challenging than some critics and commentators predict: neither Turqle, Café Libertad nor the Zapatistas have had particular difficulties surviving the 2008 financial crash or finding buyers willing to pay relatively high prices for their products – though Zapatista coffee farmers always live on the brink of abject poverty. The most problematic aspects of prefigurative trading, however, come with disentangling conventional hierarchies and making decisions together.

In the final chapter, chapter 8, I provide a conclusion and some reflections on avenues for future research.

Chapter 2:

Existing Literature on Trade Inequalities

2-1. INTRODUCTION

Development theory has attempted to explain the existence and persistence of global poverty and inequality ever since the second world war. Emerging out of Western academia and policy-making, this discipline has turned to economic theory to find ways to interpret and comprehend poverty and inequality. Economic theory therefore becomes the starting point of this chapter, which reviews the literatures that this thesis addresses and critiques.

In order to understand the causes of poverty and inequality I start by looking at the neoliberal, so-called free market capitalist view of the world, which currently informs and justifies the actions and perspectives of most powerful governments and international organisations. Going over some of the fundamental ideas of neoliberal economics, we find a model designed to further, rather than eradicate, inequalities between people and regions. A society built on competition, self-interest and individualism is not particularly well suited for creating equality and mutual aid. This becomes especially true when we consider the changes that colonialism brought to both colonised and colonising economies. Where the Europeans went, they assimilated colonised populations into a colonial division of labour whereby the colonies produced cheap raw materials, which were then manufactured, designed and made into shelf-ready products in the colonising countries. As dependency theorists have argued, colonised regions thus became stuck in low-value economies, with low investment, low wages, low skills and little prospect to ever find economic empowerment.

The extent to which colonised countries are truly *trapped* on the 'low road', and even the validity of speaking about colonised or colonising countries as though they were unified actors at all, has been questioned by GVC analysts since the 1990s. GVC analysis is today a growing and increasingly influential perspective, focusing on individual value chains (i.e. production sequences for individual products) rather than whole countries, and studying the distribution of value-added within those chains. Unlike dependency theory, which saw systemic change as the only possible change, GVC analysts are interested in the capacities of individual firms to 'upgrade', i.e. to improve their own conditions and increase their capture of value-added. The GVC literature distinguishes between 'economic' and 'social' upgrade, though in subsequent chapters I critique this division and suggest the introduction of a third type: 'voice' upgrade.

Though the shift from dependency theory's systemic and totalising analysis to GVC's more complex and dispersed interpretation is welcome, throughout this thesis I will pose even deeper critical questions around the capitalist and modernist assumptions underlying GVC analysis. In order to understand my critique, however, we must start by understanding the object of it.

2-2. NEOLIBERALISM AS THE DOMINANT DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

Since the 1970s the mainstream view – indeed the one purported by most of the largest global institutions that deal with development, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the US government, Britain's Department for International Development and the European Union – has been a neoliberal free market capitalist one (Wade 2003). The idea is that more free trade will allow poor countries to develop and overcome poverty. This view is based on classic capitalist theory: free trade and financial liberalisation will lead to greater prosperity for developing countries as they will be able to specialise on producing a small number of goods, and achieve greater efficiency since profit-seeking investors will not tolerate waste (Krauss 1997; Economist 1998).

The underlying logic behind neoliberal free trade ideology is the economic theory of supply and demand (Milward 2000: 28-29). As long as a market is left free and unregulated it will govern itself, through what Adam Smith termed the 'invisible hand' (Smith 2012 [1776]: Book IV, Chapter II). The idea here is that producers only have the incentive to produce exactly what and as much as customers want, in the cheapest way possible, since that is what maximises their profit (Milward 2000: 28-29). Capitalists often juxtapose this to a situation where the state, through legislation or financial subsidies, gives the power to one or a few companies to dominate the market: since the survival of those companies does not depend on creating a profit as large as possible, so the argument goes, they have no incentive to be very efficient, or to pay much attention to what customers want (Friedman 1984). In a free market, sellers and buyers will negotiate the price of a good until an equilibrium is reached. If the demand for a product goes up then so does the price, and vice versa. Similarly, when there is demand for a certain product then more copies of that product will be produced in order to meet the demand.

David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage applies this capitalist theory to a global level, arguing that all countries, like individuals, should specialise on the one or few products they can produce relatively most efficiently, and trade with other countries for

everything else (Krauss 1997: 4; Ricardo 1976 [1817]). According to Ricardo, a nation should specialise on producing and exporting the product it can produce with the greatest efficiency, even if it is more efficient at producing other products than other nations are. Ricardo's logic centres around opportunity cost: the most important thing according to this logic is to ensure that resources are used as efficiently as possible at any time, and that the own nation is as competitive as possible (Leininger 1977: 248).

If, on the contrary, all countries made all of their own products, everyone would lose out, since everyone cannot produce everything at the highest efficiency (Ibid.). The road to success for developing countries in this view is to gain comparative advantage in a few sectors and attract foreign direct investment to grow capacities and profits, gradually rising up to the top through sheer hard graft and intelligent business manoeuvring (Shaikh 2003: 2).

Governments and international development agencies have leaned on these fundamental free market capitalist theorems for decades. The IMF and the World Bank pushed their infamous Structural Adjustment Programmes, now replaced by the all too similar Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, onto developing countries as conditions to international loans (Stiglitz 2002). The SAPs and PRSPs have forced governments in the South to commit to market liberalisation policies (for example, letting in foreign investors and privatising state run businesses) and deregulation (for example, relaxing environmental, health & safety, and labour laws). The WTO and the bi- and multilateral trade agreements that have filled its void since the Doha Round stalled in the early 2000s, have aggressively pushed for the continuous reduction of import taxes and market regulations in the global South.

Liberalisation and deregulation, however, have not proven particularly useful tools for promoting development or eradicating poverty. One example is Haiti. It is a WTO member and has liberalised its markets heavily: it has limited its import tariffs to maximum 15%, and removed non-tariff barriers (Rodrik 2001: 21). Yet Haiti is not notably more developed than before this liberalisation took off in the 1990s, either by economic or Human Development standards (Ibid.; UN HDI 2012). Zambia is another example. As a result of Britain's colonial involvement in the early 20th century, Zambia has an enormous copper industry, and places most of its eggs in this basket. Copper provides between 70 and 80% of Zambia's export income – and when global copper prices go down, the result for Zambians is disastrous (Oxfam/Green 2009: 4). When the global financial crisis hit the world in 2008, copper prices dropped by two thirds in six months (Ibid.). At the end of 2009 prices had gone back up to about 75% of their original July 2008 (pre-crash) levels, but this sudden and short drop caused the closing of mines

and the cutting of thousands of precious mining jobs. The tough market climate also forced the government to drop copper taxes, depriving the Zambian population of tax incomes in the region of $100m per year (Ibid.).

Not only are developing countries who have tried to adhere to neoliberal policies since the 1970s not making much progress, but countries that are now developed never adhered to them when they gained economic power in the first place (Wade 2003). From the 15th century, Britain supported its most important industry – that of manufacturing wool into consumer products such as clothes – with taxes and import duties (Shaikh 2003: 11). Similar import barriers were used by European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries extensively, for example to protect themselves from cheap British industrial goods when Britain advanced through its industrial revolution (Bairoch 1993). Similarly, the US was one of the most heavily protected economies until World War II. Japan, South Korea and other Asian developed countries rose out of poverty, not through extensive free trade, but through heavy state investment, subsidies and taxes in unwanted imports and exports (Shaikh 2003).

This protectionism is not only historical. Even today, the European Union subsidises its agriculture to such an extent that a European cow gets a payment of about $2 per day from EU subsidies – which is more than the poorest half of the world's humans have to live on (Oxfam/Fowler 2002). China, which thanks to its recent GDP growth is often hailed as proof of the success of free market capitalism, is actually a better proof of the success of interventionism (Kiely 2008). China's GDP and the value of its exports have indeed gone up in the last forty years, but as it turns out, not predominantly thanks to liberalisation. As Rodrik argues, the most rapid growth happened in the 1970s, before China started opening up its markets (2001: 24). Even today, China is one of the most protected economies in the world, with tariffs of over 30% and non-tariff barriers such as export bans and subsidies (Kiely 2008: 359). Protectionist policies such as import taxes and tariffs enable the government to make foreign products artificially more expensive, thus encouraging inhabitants to purchase domestically-made goods and support home industries. Similarly, subsidies allow governments to put domestically-made goods 'on sale' to make them cheaper and more attractive to customers.

That free market capitalism has not been very extensively implemented in practice is, however, not the main indication that such an approach would fail to bring prosperity for all. Even by its own logic, free market capitalism is flawed in several serious ways. For example, theories such as Ricardo's comparative advantage presume that all actors involved have full and detailed knowledge of just how efficient they and others are at any given moment – otherwise the necessary calculations would be impossible to make. In

practice of course, actors rarely have such information, and furthermore the numbers in question often fluctuate constantly. Indeed, this is what makes venture capital so exciting (for those who are so inclined and equipped).

An even more serious problem is that the free market (unless regulated) is distorted by successful firms' economies of scale, particularly through branding and advertising (Klein 2001). Extensive advertising campaigns; the ability to win exclusive contracts with retailers, schools, bars, etc where the stocking of competitor's brands is contractually forbidden; branding; presence in global media – these all influence consumer choices and give considerations of efficiency, price and even product quality diminishing relevance. It is clearly not the case that free market capitalism is necessarily the ticket to efficiency.

What more comprehensive critics of capitalism call into question, however, is not only its failure to achieve efficiency, but even the idea that efficiency should be the founding logic for an economic model at all. Are not other values more important – emotional satisfaction, happiness, sustainability, mutual aid? Should any single value be the fundamental guiding logic for our global productive activity at all? The central capitalist assumption that humans are at their most basic rational, selfish and calculating beings has also been called into question. We cannot explain all the non-profitable and sharing activities that people take part in every day using capitalist or rational-choice models (Gibson-Graham 2006a). As we will see in the next chapter, decolonial scholars have criticised the discipline of economics for constructing what economists themselves present as objective and neutral scientific theories around underlying values that are actually deeply political in nature (Blaney and Inayatullah 2010).

The critique of the values and theoretical models that underpin a neoliberal approach to economics and development is one strand of anticolonial criticism, which we will return to in the next chapter. Another strand of anticolonial critique – one that has been more influential on government and development agency policy since the 1960s – focuses on the colonial division of labour in the global economy.

2-3. THE GLOBAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

In the 1950s and 60s and 70s, a school of mainly Latin American development theorists became particularly interested in the relationship between global inequalities and the distribution of jobs in the global economy (Martinussen 1997: 85; O'Toole 2007: 423). What those scholars placed at the centre of their analysis was the fact that colonialism

brought a rearrangement of patterns of economic production in colonised regions. Being colonised meant, in part, being forced into an extractive economy producing raw materials – often using slave labour – which were refined by citizens of the coloniser's nation, for the benefit of the latter. This history lives on in the present economy. Whatever colonised people were making a living from before colonialism, they now primarily work in sectors and jobs that are less skilled and less paid, such as farming, mining and assembly line production. The global North, on the other hand, houses most of the world's higher-paid and higher-skilled jobs such as management, design, research and marketing (Hoogvelt 2001: 38-39; ILO 2007). Dependency theorists saw this global division of labour as key to explaining global poverty and inequality. In order to understand the arguments around the exploitative division of labour, a central theoretical underpinning of this thesis, I will here trace it back to its roots.

2-3.1 The Colonial Nature of the Division of Labour

Next to Victoria Falls, on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, stands one of the many statues scattered around Southern Africa that celebrate its European colonisers. This one is of David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary and 'explorer'. The plaque on the statue's base carries Livingstone's motto: 'Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation', making unabashedly evident the colonisers' interests. What European colonisation brought to the people of Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as other colonies, was not only the imposition of new beliefs and new ways of life but also a new economy.

In most cases, European colonisers would destroy existing patterns of production, both traditional and high-tech, and remake the colony into source of cheap raw materials powered by under- or non-paid workers. For example, in 1890s Congo the Belgian king Leopold capitalised on the country's abundant rubber plants, which had traditionally only been harvested for sparse local consumption. In Europe, the pneumatic tyre was just becoming popular, making rubber a lucrative product. Through violence and the threat of violence, the Belgian colonisers forced many Congolese people to leave their existing lifestyles and productive activities behind to assume new roles as scarcely paid or slave workers in a new large-scale rubber industry, cutting down wild rubber vines and exporting the rubber to Europe (Hochschild 1998: 158-166). A century earlier in India, Britain – itself a rising textiles manufacturer – destroyed the existing Indian textiles industry and replaced it with raw cotton production, wiping out India as a competitor known internationally for its exquisite quality textiles, and securing artificially cheap access to raw cotton (Baran quoted in So 1990: 111). In the Caribbean, a more famous example, slaves were forced to work on sugar plantations that had not existed before the Europeans arrived and planted them there in the 17th century (Klein

2007). These are of course only a few examples – the story is similar in a plethora of other cases.

It might be tempting to simplify the chains of causality such that the colonial exploitation of the 17th and 18th centuries is what made Europe so rich and prosperous, at the cost of the developing world. This is partly true, though importantly, data collated and analysed by Bairoch (1993) shows that colonialism actually was not a particularly great source of income for Europe as a region if we look at economics alone. Such an argument is also made by Kiely (1998, 2010). What this data shows is that, while it is true that colonialism created a significant loss for the colonies as regional economies, the relationship was asymmetrical in that Europe did not experience an equivalent financial gain to the colonies' loss (Bairoch 1993 ch. 8; Kiely 1998: 60, 2010: 78). The financial value of the resources 'acquired' by the colonial powers in their colonies was not by far large enough to account for Europe's new prosperity directly. Colonial 'adventurers' and entrepreneurs have largely been *individuals* or *individual firms* (for example, The East India Companies, Henry Morton Stanley, Dr Livingstone and their highest tiers of employees) who have made large personal fortunes from their colonial endeavours, but their wealth is not large enough to be significant on an aggregate national scale (see e.g. Hochschild 1998; Buchan 1994).

It is, thus, not so simple as to argue that the average European became rich relative to the average global Southerner as a direct and sole result of colonisation. It is more accurate to say that the average African, Latin American or Asian person became poor relative to Europeans – or died – as a direct result. The inequalities between North and South were exacerbated with the arrival of the industrial revolution, originating in Britain in the late eighteenth century. According to some commentators, the emergence of the industrial revolution in Britain can in part be attributed to Britain's colonial exploitation. For example, economic historian Robert C. Allen argues that British wages were relatively high in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, compared both to wages in the rest of Europe and to fuel costs (2009). With wages so high and fuel costs so low, British capitalists had a particularly strong incentive to develop machines that could replace human labour. The reason wages became so high during the seventeenth century, argues Allen, is that British colonial activities, especially in India, had rendered Britain's textile exports so lucrative and successful that downward pressure on wages was less intense (Ibid).

When the Industrial Revolution took off in Britain, the next notable countries to follow were the continental European neighbours Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany – after that, the United States, Australia and other Western countries (Evans

and Rydén 2005). This industrialisation did not spread in the same way to the colonies. The reasons for this are complex and varied, but some patterns can be discerned. Colonial forces (first European trading companies or 'explorers', and later European governments) imposed new trading regimes in their colonies whereby the latter became specialists on producing raw materials for global consumption. Some countries, such as India, had been sites of advanced large-scale production of finished produce prior to colonisation (Clingingsmith and Williamson 2008). As such, India experienced what Bairoch calls *de*-industrialisation as a result of colonialism (1993). Instead of continuing to sell finished cloth and clothing apparel, India became an exporter of cheap raw cotton to Britain (Ibid.). Other countries, such as Congo, had not previously been highly integrated into global markets, but became so as a result of colonialism (Pakenham 1992; Hochschild 1998). Instead of producing to meet local needs, the Congolese were enslaved and forced to produce raw materials for export to Europe.

Colonies could not protect themselves from European industrial imports through tariffs or taxes, since their colonial rulers forbade it (Clingingsmith and Williamson 2008; Bairoch 1993: 89; Twomey 1983; Roy 2002). As we saw above, despite neoliberal mythologies that now-developed countries grew successful thanks to free-market capitalism, these economies protected themselves very heavily from foreign imports and used state policies to promote local produce, entrepreneurship and innovation (Wade 2003). Though this overview has been very brief, we can see how colonialism has affected the economies of colonised regions. Whereas before colonialism economies in the global South were diverse and complex, they became sites of resource extraction, and later cheap factory labour.

2-3.2 Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory

Since the 1960s, dependency theorists, world systems analysts and others have been pointing to the continuing importance of this colonial restructuring in explaining global economic inequalities today (Dos Santos 1970: 232; Frank 1967; So 1990: 97, 99, Wallerstein 1974: 68). While colonialism can never be the single explanation for the divide between rich and poor countries, it is a very strong contributing factor (Kiely 1998: 61). What dependency theorists and world systems analysts have argued is that there still is a division of labour in the world economy whereby rich countries (the 'core') perform productive tasks that are more highly value-added – i.e. that require higher technology, better infrastructures, and more initial investment, but that yield much higher earnings – and poor countries (the 'periphery') perform tasks with low value-addition (Prebisch 1959; Dos Santos 1970; Arrighi 1973; Wallerstein 1974; Kiely 2010: 119, 121-2, 179; So 1990; Hoogvelt 2001: Ch1).

Generally speaking, it is still the case that most global Northerners' involvement in the international economy takes the form of office jobs in management, design, research and marketing – and Southerners' roles in the global economy are usually less skilled and poorly paid ones in farming, mining, or assembly line production. This is of course not true for everybody but there are undeniable patterns in the world's division of labour. A UNESCO report shows that the developed world – which is home to only 15% of the world's population – houses over 62% of the world's researchers (UNESCO 2010: 8). Figures from the International Labour Organisation (for 2005) show that over 63% of workers in Sub-Saharan Africa, and around 50% of workers in East and South East Asia, were employed in agricultural jobs (ILO 2007: 12). In the developed world, meanwhile, only 3.3% of jobs were in agriculture. White collar service jobs occupied over 72% of the developed world's work force, but only 27.9% of Sub-Saharan Africa's and between 25 and 28% in East and South East Asia's.

Starting out in a 'low-road' position – with low wages, low technology, low skills – it is very difficult to make the investments needed to move up the value chain and build high-tech and cutting edge industries (Frank 1967: 9). Added to this, the balance of payments for countries that largely export lower-end raw materials or assembly labour power can go into the negative if people on internationally relatively low wages want to buy the finished products their labour went towards (Dos Santos 1970: 232). This transfer of money from the poor to the rich was taken to an enormous scale when peripheral countries tried to industrialise in the post-war period, buying up expensive machines and technologies patented in the core with loans they are still paying off (or defaulting on) to this day (Ibid., Silva 2007: 75).

This unequal division of labour has also come to be solidified in the international institutional system, with the IMF and World Bank attaching neoliberal conditions and 'poverty reduction strategies' to their loans, and the World Trade Organisation outlawing protectionism in the periphery while protecting the core's patented technology and 'intellectual property rights' (Dos Santos 1970; Kiely 2010: 137, 188-189). The basic argument of dependency theory and world systems analysis thus revolves around this global division of labour. This type of view is directly opposed to Ricardian comparative advantage theory, since specialisation and trade for most developing countries has meant being stuck on the low road – not benefitting from the most efficient and lucrative production.

Instead of specialising on one export product, many dependency theorists recommended that peripheral countries build capacity to produce essentially everything domestically –

what has come to be known as Import-Substituting Industrialisation (ISI). By building their own capacity to produce all goods themselves, so the argument went, peripheral governments could break the cycle of dependency upon the core (Kiely 1998: 83; Prebisch 1961: 623). The main actor in the ISI project was the state, which would industrialise the country through initiating and supporting industrialisation projects and factories, building infrastructure, imposing tariffs on imported goods to make domestically produced goods more competitive, and setting the foreign exchange rate at appropriate levels (O'Toole 2007: 427). Many Latin American countries practiced ISI from the 1930s all the way up to the 1970s (Kiely 1998: 83). Initially many countries saw significant successes – one example is Brazil, whose government used ISI strategies especially from the late 1940s to late-60s (Lowinger 1974: 429-30). The Brazilian strategy consisted partly of state-orchestrated incentives to private investment (domestic as well as foreign) such as import tariffs and loans at very favourable interest rates, and partly of combined state-private ownership in heavy industries such as transportation equipment, chemicals and steel production (Ibid. p. 431). Importing products that could already be produced domestically, or that were considered luxuries, became illegal in the late 1950s (Kiely 1998: 87).

The 1950s was a decade of very high economic growth for Brazil and other Latin American countries, most of which had ISI strategies (O'Toole 2007: 428). Average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Brazil 1950-60 was almost 7 percent – a figure higher than Western economies (Bulmer-Thomas 2003: 300; O'Toole 2007: 428). From 1949 to 1964, domestic Brazilian production of manufactured goods grew by 266 percent (O'Toole 2007: 428). Thus, ISI in Brazil as well as the rest of the continent seemed at first to be a success: the share of domestically made high value-added products went up significantly, and so did the earnings in the country. By the 1960s, however, this success had turned sour and the ISI project took its place in history as a failure (see e.g. O'Toole 2007: 428; So 1990: 94; Silva 2007). What had gone wrong? Firstly, much of the industrialisation had been financed with foreign loans (Kiely 1998: 87). The machines, raw materials and infrastructure needed for ISI projects required state investment or epic proportions, pushing governments to take loans from the World Bank, other IFIs and foreign governments. Secondly, many countries found that domestic production was not large enough in size to achieve the economies of scale needed for economic viability (O'Toole 2007: 432). In the 1960s, several Latin American countries formed a regional trading bloc to remedy this problem, the Latin American Free Trade Agreement (LAFTA). LAFTA offered tariff reductions to its members, but found little success (Mattli 1999). LAFTA was badly run, with poor leadership, and designed in a way that was not equally beneficial to all its members and thus did not inspire compliance by all states (Ibid.).

Furthermore, Thorp (1992: 191) shows that ISI efforts were continually sabotaged by the USA and other rich countries. The US government, for example, made its aid and preferable political relations with Latin America conditional upon favourable trading conditions for US exports (Ibid.). Others argue, similarly, that the failure of ISI was not by necessity due to its economic workings, but rather the failure was a political one (Silva 2007: 76; O'Toole 2007: 433; Rodrik 1997). Bad governance by politicians and civil servants influenced by contradictory interests and pressures were, according to some, the key factors that brought ISI down (Ibid.). Right-wing political actors, supported by domestic elites as well as governments of core countries, took political power in Latin America in the late 1960s and -70s, cutting ISI efforts that did not fit in with their conservative or neoliberal political visions (Silva 2007: 76). In Brazil, a military dictatorship took power in a 1964 coup, supported by the US government, and started to unravel Brazil's ISI policies (Ibid. p. 81).

More radical dependency scholars called for a comprehensive break with the global capitalist economy, arguing for a complete delinking from it (Frank 1967: 119-20; Martinussen 1997: 89). As Andre Gunder Frank put it, the only way out of dependency was to 'destroy and replace capitalism' (Frank 1967: 270). Where a more moderate dependency theorist such as Prebisch would have been content with an industrialisation of the periphery – with industrialising businesses partly owned by foreign investors and with a successful re-integration into the world economy as its eventual outcome – Frank, Dos Santos and their supporters argued for a complete break with that world economy (Frank 1967: 119-20; Dos Santos 1970: 236; Martinussen 1997: 89). Such a view is problematic for several reasons. Setting aside the authoritarian and homicidal nature of many actually-existing (so-called) socialist regimes, the idea that revolution would come via the state is ontologically problematic as it assumes that power is centralised and that political means do not need to match political ends. I will discuss this issue in the next chapter, where I will also look at a more useful incarnation of the idea of 'delinking' that contemporary decolonial scholars are proposing; epistemic delinking.

The assumption that power is centralised is only one of the many modernist assumptions underlying dependency theory according to its critics. The most common criticism of perspectives like dependency theory is that they tend to over-generalise and make too sweeping statements about the world (So 1990: 131; Leys 1996: 58; Martinussen 1997: 93; Kiely 2010: 125). The world is varied and complicated, yet dependency scholars have attempted to explain it all through a few simple generalisations, as if all peripheral and core countries were the same. Arguments of this type include objections that the dependency of the periphery is not in the interests of all

economic actors in the core – for example, a European-owned mobile phone company would rather see a global South full of potential middle to high-income customers, than one that is poor and unindustrialised (Leys 1996: 58; So 1990: 131). While this criticism convincingly shows that everything cannot be explained by looking at large scale structures, it does not disprove the idea that there is a general *tendency* towards the global division of labour, and that this tendency is very influential in the world economy (Hoogvelt 2001; Kiely 2010: 119, 177). To speak about the division of labour is important, as long as we are aware that we are only discussing part of the picture.

Another criticism, which follows on from the previous one, is that dependency theorists who had claimed that development for the periphery was impossible because of the exploitative nature of the global economy, were proven wrong in the 1980s and 90s when peripheral East Asian countries like South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan sky-rocketed up into high-end production and design (Martinussen 1997: 93). South Korea, for example, was one of the poorest countries in the world before the 1970s, with an export economy based on low-end tasks such as sugar-refining and textiles (Chang 2007: 2-4). Today South Korea is one of the world's richest countries, with a high-end economy and several world-famous high-tech brands (e.g. Samsung, LG Electronics, Hyundai) (Ibid.). South Korea was thus not prevented from developing by the global division of labour.

World systems analysis, in some ways a younger sibling of dependency theory, has developed a way of accounting for such development without casting aside the division of labour argument. World systems analysts such as Immanuel Wallerstein (at least for most of his career) see the positions available in the global economy not just as two-fold as dependency theorists had argued, but as three-fold: there is the core, the periphery, and the *semi-periphery* (Wallerstein 1979: ch4). The semi-periphery is engaged in a mix of core-like and peripheral productive processes, and, importantly, it can be a transitional position between the two. Wallerstein argued that it is not only natural, but necessary for certain countries to experience shifts in their fortune. The first reason for this is a political one: '[a] system based on unequal reward must constantly worry about political rebellion of oppressed elements' (Ibid. p. 69). In other words, if the world system allows some tokenistic development, it gives the oppressed majority the false impression that they can better themselves as long as they keep their heads down and carry on working hard, which averts rebellion. The second reason is economic: since wages are much lower in (semi)peripheral countries, and since high technology always develops rapidly and soon becomes outdated and affordable, there will inevitably be some investment in building such non-cutting edge sectors outside the core (Ibid. p. 70).

Wallerstein offered elaborate descriptions of the routes available for a country to move from the (semi)periphery to the core, including what he calls 'seizing the chance' (i.e. going out on a limb to invest in technological upgrade at a strategic moment, to be able to enter traditionally core-dominated markets and undercut core companies' prices); developing 'by invitation' from another core country (i.e. receiving large amounts of foreign investment within a short time), or becoming self-reliant and cutting out expensive imports from abroad (Wallerstein 1979: 76-81). World systems analysts can thus use their theories to describe the rise of these East Asian countries.

The problem with Wallerstein's argument, however, is precisely the formulaic, simplistic and totalising image it paints of the world. Wallerstein wrote as though he was unveiling a hidden truth about how the world 'really' works – and this truth takes the form of a package deal of ideas that together can explain everything. But world systems analysts offer no persuasive evidence to show that the world 'really' works in this way and not in others; Wallerstein gives no evidence that a country can transition from (semi)periphery to core only in one of the above-mentioned ways, or indeed that countries even act as a unitary actor or are meaningful units of analysis.

As for Wallerstein's slightly conspiratorial ideas about the need for a semi-periphery: how exactly is it that an entire world system can 'worry' about rebellion or take unified action to ensure that people do not realise they are oppressed? (Zeitlin quoted in So 1990: 220). Who would be doing this worrying and acting? Logically it cannot be the general public in the core since, in that case, we would all already know about it. It cannot be core governments since they do not have control over where private individuals or corporations do or do not invest their money abroad (except in rare cases where national economic embargoes are used). And it cannot be core investors or corporations themselves since these actors act as individual competitors, driven by short-term private financial gain, rather than as unified schemers looking for long-term collective benefit.

But importantly, that Wallerstein's argument was too formulaic and prescriptive does not take away from the fact that there is a tendency in the world economy towards an exploitative division of labour favouring rich areas over poor. A more tenable position would be that the division of labour (as one important factor among many) makes it *difficult* for peripheral countries to develop, but that it *can* be done under unusual and unlikely circumstances. Wallerstein's list of pathways is informative here, but it should not be seen as an exhaustive list or prescriptive formula. Indeed, this is how proponents of world systems analysis have defended Wallerstein's analysis (Palat 1989; So 1990: 226).

More recent portrayals of the global division of labour tend to describe the core and periphery as a division between regions or individuals rather than between countries (e.g. Dicken 2015). Before the second world war, 90 percent of world manufacturing production was concentrated in 11 core countries (Ibid. p. 14). Today, production has been increasingly fragmented into specialised production steps and less value-added tasks have been largely outsourced to factories in the global South. Alongside this shift, many urban centres in the global South have seen a rise in local businesspeople who are able to invest and trade all over the world, meaning there is increasingly a North-within-the-South, and with declining welfare systems in the global North, a South-within-the-North.

2-3.3 Global Value Chains Analysis

GVC analysis is a more recent perspective that analyses the tendency for a global division of labour through specific examples, avoiding over-generalisation and teleology. GVC sprang out partly of a world systems tradition in the late 1980s (Bair 2009: 7-10). World systems analysts Hopkins and Wallerstein first coined the concept 'commodity chains', referring to the 'set of inputs' that contribute to the production of an item (1977: 19). Here the concept was used in a very broad sense, including *all* inputs, not only the raw materials and production processes that go into making a product itself, but also the food the workers eat and the houses they live in. Hopkins and Wallerstein used the concept to illustrate the extent to which the world's economy is interconnected in what they called a world-system: defined in this broad way, one commodity chain could not really be separated from any other.

Today the term is usually used in a narrower sense, including only materials and processes that directly go into the production of a good or service, though the defining what is or is not part of a chain will always to some degree be subjective (Kaplinsky and Morris 2001: 52). Along with a narrower understanding of what a chain is has come a shift in the strategic function of the analysis: whereas Hopkins and Wallerstein used the commodity chains framework to highlight the integrated nature of the world-system, current GVC analysts use it to highlight inequalities of the global division of labour and the possibilities for 'upgrade' (Gibbon et al 2008: 316).

GVC literature also had other influences at its inception: agro-food studies texts such as Friedland et al's 1981 study of the replacement of manual workers in the American lettuce industry by new technology looked at distinct commodity chains from the start to the end of a product. Several other writers have used this analytical tool independently

of each other, which is why it is impossible to say that GVC analysis has any single origin (Bair 2009). Importantly, however, what all of these strands have in common, and which is still true of GVC today, is that the underlying aim behind chain analysis generally is to promote more egalitarian structures of production, find paths to 'sustainable economic upgrading' in developing countries and combat poverty (Global Value Chains.org 2006).

GVC analysis studies the division of labour within each value chain (for example, a commodity) regardless of the geographical locations of participating firms (Gereffi et al 1994: 1). For example, looking at the specific value chain of coffee, a GVC analyst might trace the division of labour between firms: those who plant, grow and harvest the beans; those who transport the beans at various stages; those who blend and roast; design and manufacture packaging; retail it; deal with any waste; offer post-retail customer services; etc – see Figure 2.1 (Daviron and Ponte 2005: 54-55). The point is to look at power relationships within such chains, partly economic ones (who in the chain captures most value-added?) and partly organisational ones (who makes decisions in the chain? Who is included in and excluded from the chain? Who has access to key information and infrastructures?) (Bolwig et al 2010: 174; Trienekens 2011: 57).

In a path-breaking 1994 book, Gary Gereffi, who has been credited as the main co-founder of GVC analysis (or in his terms at the time, Global *Commodity* Chains analysis), listed three different general areas of interest in analysing value chains (Gereffi 1994: 96-97). Firstly, tracking the 'input-output structure', or in other words, figuring out exactly what materials, labour, tools and processes go into making the final good, and how value-added is distributed along this input-output structure. One example of such an analysis can be found as part of Daviron and Ponte's study of coffee production, excerpts from which are reproduced in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Excerpt from Input-Output Map of Dry-Method Coffee Value Chain

(Source: Daviron and Ponte 2005: 54)

Table 2.1: Breakdown of Value-Added for Uganda-to-Italy Coffee Chain

(Source: Daviron and Ponte 2005: 208)

Value chain node	Details	US$/lb*	Proportion of retail price (%)
Farm gate	Selling price to local trader	0.14	6.6
Export	FOT (free on truck) ex-Kampala	0.21	10.3
Export harbour	FOB (free on board) ex-Mombasa	0.26	12.4
	CIF (cost, insurance & freight) ex-EU		
Import harbour	Import harbour	0.30	14.3
Roaster	Selling price to supermarket chain	1.81	86.5
Retail	Consumer price at supermarket**	2.09	100.0

Note: * Roasted coffee equivalent weight (conversion factors: hulled/unhulled = 0.55; green ready for export/hulled = 0.95 due to drying and sorting losses in export preparation in Uganda; roasted/green = 0.80).
Average exchange rate: US$1 = ITL1,743 (average October 2001–September 2002; source: www.oanda.com).
** VAT excluded.
Sources: Own fieldwork data.

Secondly, mapping the 'territoriality', i.e. the geographic locations where the different inputs in the value chain are made. Daviron and Ponte's example above is relatively simple, with a bi-national transaction from Uganda to Italy, but some examples are more complex. The Apple iPhone is one such example, spreading its production across at least seven countries (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Territoriality of an iPhone

(Source: Kraemer et al 2011: 11)

Location/ Company	Activity	iPhone 4 (2010)		16 GB Wi-Fi iPad (2010)	
		Amount/Cost	Share of "Retail"	Amount/Cost	Share of "Retail"
	Price to consumer	$199		$499	
	Carrier subsidy	($350)		NA	
Worldwide	**"Retail" price**	$549	100.0	$499	100.0
Worldwide	Distribution and retail (Gross value)	NA	0.0	$75	15.0
	Wholesale price (received by Apple)	$549	100.0	$424	85.0
Value Capture	**Total value capture**	$401	73.0	$238	47.7
U.S.	U.S. Total	$334	60.8	$162	32.5
Apple	Design/marketing	$321	58.5	$150	30.1
U.S. suppliers	Manufacturing of components	$13	2.4	$12	2.4
Japan	Manufacturing of components	$3	0.5	$7	1.4
South Korea	Manufacturing of components	$26	4.7	$34	6.8
Taiwan	Manufacturing of components	$3	0.5	$7	1.4
E.U.	Manufacturing of components	$6	1.1	$1	0.2
Unidentified	Manufacturing of components	$29	5.3	$27	5.4
Direct Labor	**Total direct labor**	$29	5.3	$33	6.6
Unidentified	Labor to manufacture components	$19	3.5	$25	5.0
China	Labor for components and for assembly	$10	1.8	$8	1.6
Worldwide	**Non-labor cost of materials for inputs**	$120	21.9	$154	30.9

Thirdly, Gereffi lists outlining the 'governance structure' – in other words, looking at how decisions are made in a value chain (1994: 97). Interactions within a chain tend not to occur 'spontaneously, automatically or even systematically' (Gibbon et al 2008: 319) – indeed, it would be strange if firms suddenly spontaneously joined forces to produce something. Rather, one actor in the value chain often plays a co-ordinating role, making chain-wide decisions about what is to be produced, by whom, how, by when, and at what cost (Morrison et al 2008: 40). I will return to this concept below.

From an International Development perspective, Gereffi's three constituents of value chain analysis allow scholars to explore the question of how trade on a global scale could be made more even. How can developing countries or regions *upgrade* to a higher position in global value chains in order to capture more of the value-added, and what kind of *governance* structures can facilitate such upgrade?

2-3.4 Upgrades

As well as offering a more specific and detailed level of analysis than dependency and world systems approaches typically did, GVC analysis also departs from these

perspectives on the issue of whether and how firms can improve their situation in the division of labour directly. A dependency theorist would, crudely speaking, either be very cynical about the possibility of dependent countries ever escaping their low-road position at all, or would argue that such change must be systematic. World systems theorists, meanwhile, would point to any of its pre-defined progression routes for semi-periphery to core movement. GVC analysis offers something different: a conceptual tool to understand how the improvement of a firm's place in the division of labour happens, what it means to move upwards, and what factors or strategies often prove themselves helpful or otherwise – known as upgrading.

GVC analysts distinguish between *economic* upgrading and *social* upgrading (Barrientos et al 2011). Economic upgrading means that a firm comes to capture more value-added, whether through exporting products that require higher skilled and higher paid labour (for example clothes designed in-house rather than made to others' specifications), more luxurious or higher quality products, higher volumes of product or more efficiently produced products (Humphrey and Schmitz 2002). Social upgrading means that workers receive better working conditions, for example higher pay, better hours, more job security, better health-and-safety standards, reductions in discrimination, etc (Barrientos et al 2011).

There are many ways in which a firm can upgrade economically. Humphrey and Schmitz (2002: 1020) were the first to develop an extensive classification, distinguishing analytically between four, often separate but sometimes overlapping, kinds of economic upgrade:

- process upgrading (making one's existing production process more efficient to yield higher returns)
- product upgrading (making more advanced and expensive products)
- functional upgrading (extending one's productive abilities to perform more functions above or below one's position in the value chain. For example, acquiring the ability to roast coffee as well as to grow the beans)
- inter-sectoral upgrading (using one's skills in the production of one product to move into the production of another).

Since this original typology the list has been added to by several authors, summarised in Bolwig et al 2010 p. 177:

> 'delivering larger volumes (even of lower quality), matching standards and certifications, delivering on logistics and lead times, getting better paid for the same product (for example, fair trade) (Gibbon, 2001; Gibbon and Ponte, 2005;

Ponte, 2009)'.

Many authors in the GVC literature have written about examples of firms that have or have not upgraded. For example, Tokatli (2007) studies the Turkish clothing firm Sarar's shift from manufacturing for Hugo Boss (a large international brand and dominant firm) to breaking away and independently starting three of its own clothing brands along with its own retail shops in Europe and the US. Humphrey (2004) looks at the improved practices of exporters of horticultural products in several African countries, including improved local processing (e.g. better trimming, packing and labelling of flowers before they are shipped off to Europe); more environmentally friendly production; and improved irrigation and lighting.

One key learning point from such literature is that upgrade is very complex and not always straightforward. Ponte and Ewert (2009) studied South African wine producers and found that, though more obvious forms of product, process and functional upgrade (for example improving the quality of the wine, training staff, acquiring better machines and facilities) strengthened the position of the wine producers at hand, more counter-intuitive forms of upgrade were also important. Ponte and Ewert found that for these wine producers, functional and product *down*grade was sometimes more lucrative since the wine market was not necessarily demanding a greater supply of up-market high quality wines, but increasingly large volumes of non-premium quality bulk produce. Similarly, process upgrade sometimes involved implementing changes that, counter-intuitively, did *not* lead to greater efficiency or more competitive pricing. For example, spending resources on improving food safety standards or acquiring Fairtrade certification was sometimes the more lucrative option.

As well as 'vertical' intra-chain power relationships, which are traditionally studied in GVC analysis, Bolwig et al (2010) suggest we should also study what they call 'horizontal' links in a chain – in other words, the poverty- or power-related issues that cut across the value chain on a local level. Poor households often rely on incomes from more value chains than one: they often grow a range of crops, some of which are for subsistence and do not enter circulation through the money form (p. 179). Therefore, what happens in one value chain may have a complicated and unforeseen effect on producers, as the value chain in question may only be one out of several that they are involved in.

Social upgrade is a more recent addition to the literature on GVC upgrades. Social upgrade is about 'enhanc[ing] the quality of […] employment'. This may not result directly from economic upgrading since a firm may, for example, choose to lower its workers' wages in order to capture more value-added (Barrientos et al 2011). The

inclusion of workers' conditions into the GVC framework was motivated by the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda of 1999. Barrientos et al sub-divide social upgrade into two types: measurable standards, i.e. official and legal conditions that directly affect workers' wellbeing (working hours, pay, pensions, etc), and enabling rights, i.e. the bargaining power of workers in general (freedom of association, voice, empowerment, etc), which tend to enable workers to improve their conditions.

Critics of the concept of social upgrading have pointed to its limited nature since it leaves some basic inequalities in the capitalist economy unquestioned. From a marxist perspective, Ben Selwyn (2012, 2013) points out that the treatment of the firm as a unified entity ignores the inequalities inherent in a capitalist firm's ownership structure. If a firm is owned by capitalists and not by its workers, the workers are by Marx's definition exploited since the capitalists are extracting a surplus from their labour. Consequently, it is misleading to speak about social upgrade without mentioning that the entire organisational structure of a capitalist firm is inherently exploitative. By calling slight improvements in workers' conditions 'social upgrade', there is a risk that GVC analysts end up congratulating capitalists for being slightly more pleasant oppressors than previously (Ibid). Similarly, speaking of social upgrade in relation to firms as indivisible units fails to capture inequalities between people who are formally employed in the firm, and people who only informally depend on employment in it. For example, a housewife who takes care of the reproduction of labourers, whether her husband or her children, does not receive an official wage from the firm and is not included in considerations of social upgrade, but depends on her husband's income from it and his working conditions (Gibson-Graham 2006b).

2-3.5 Governance

Not only must we consider power relations within firms, but also between firms within a chain. As we saw above, this latter point was seized by Gereffi and integrated into the GVC perspective early on. There are many different ways in which firms in a value chain will co-ordinate their actions and organise decision-making – the GVC literature has developed a typology of overlapping but discernible governance styles, summarised in Gereffi et al 2005.

- *Market*-style governance means different firms in a value chain have no forward agreement or commitment to each other, but rather deals are struck on a case-by-case basis. The different firms in a chain are completely separate from each other and do not co-operate or share resources or ideas. Buyers would typically turn up after the good has already been produced, buy it and then go away again,

without making any specific requests about the quality or quantity of the product beforehand.

- *Network*-style governance:
    - *Modular* value chains see a little more co-ordination between firms – for example, buyers might requests products of a specific design or quality, but the producer will still use their own machinery and production processes to achieve this.
    - *Relational* value chains are yet a little bit more co-ordinated, allowing for communication of much more detailed and specific information about the product in question between firms. This often requires face-to-face meetings and a deeper relationship between firms, which makes switching firms more costly. The relationship between firms in this type of chain is generally a more hierarchical one, with one 'lead firm' dominating the relationship, i.e. a firm that has the most capital, the best brand position, or is otherwise the most strongly placed to make decisions about what should happen in the chain.
    - *Captive* value chains are dominated by a lead firm which has long-term ongoing relationships with their suppliers and which has a large degree of control over the nature of the product and the process through which it is produced. Captive producer firms generally have a clearly and narrowly defined place in the value chain – for example the mere assembly of two specific components. Due to the use of long term contracts producer firms generally stay in the same place in the same chain for long periods of time.
- *Hierarchical* value chains are when a lead firm takes care of the entire value chain in-house and thereby controls and owns every single link in the chain.

Humphrey and Schmitz (2000) look at how different types of chain governance might affect the upgrading possibilities of a firm lower down in the chain. There are no universal laws here, but the authors find that *quasi-hierarchical chains* ('captive' ones in the typology above) based on mainstream capitalist principles can make it difficult for lower-end firms to upgrade. Since lead firms higher up in the chain can decide to pull out from a supplier if they fear their position in the chain is being challenged, lower-end firms have a disincentive to attempt upgrade (p. 23). *Hierarchical* chains present the same prospect but more starkly: lead firms have complete power over lower-end firms and will generally have no reason to allow or help them to upgrade.

In market-style chains there is no lead firm to disincentivise upgrade, but lower-end firms may still find it difficult. As we saw above, free market situations tend to benefit

the strong over the weak. More specifically in terms of upgrade, market situations require producer firms to compete with each other to win contracts, often by undercutting each others' prices, leaving little surplus to reinvest in upgrade (Pimbert et al 2001: 15-16). Furthermore, while lower-end firms in (quasi)hierarchical chains are limited by their chains' lead firms, this more long-term connection with somebody who is higher up the chain means they have at least some access to quite rich information about how value chains work, what lead firms do and what kind of products buyers want and how they want them – this information is much more difficult to come by for lower-end firms in a market-style chain (Humphrey and Schmitz 2000: 25). Humphrey and Schmitz find that the governance type that is inherently most favourable (but also most rare) for lower-end firms' upgrade is an egalitarian network-style, where 'relationships between firms are more symmetrical than in quasi-hierarchy but contain stronger mutual commitment than in a market-based relationship' (Ibid.).

In subsequent chapters I will critically discuss both social and economic upgrade as analytical concepts, and I will suggest that a third type of upgrade should be added to the GVC analysis toolbox, namely upgrade of 'voice'. I introduce this notion in chapter 6. This type of upgrade revolves around the abilities of people who work for firms within value chains to express their views on what values their transaction should reproduce. This concern follows from the critical analysis of the concept of value in the next chapter: I argue that value is a more complex and a more political and struggled-over concept than GVC analysts acknowledge. As we will see, voice upgrade incorporates some of the concerns of GVC governance, but takes the question of influence and decision-making much further and applies it to internal firm relations as well as chain relations.

2-4. CONCLUSION

We have panned across some of the most insightful and persuasive arguments around the colonial division of labour. European colonial powers rearranged colonised economies to produce raw materials, and later to provide factory assembly, towards products designed and finished largely in the colonies. In some cases such as India, colonisation brought a process of de-industrialisation. In others, such as the Congo, it brought a form of industrialisation through systematised slavery. For 'core' countries, colonisation meant getting access to cheap raw materials which could be processed at home and exported to the rest of the world.

This global pattern of core and peripheral countries has become more complex and jumbled in recent decades, with urban centres in the global South housing communities

of rich and highly skilled businesspeople, as well as the kind of low-road poverty that is also present in many rural areas around them. The reverse, the periphery-within-the-core, also exists in the global North. What cannot be denied, however, is that patterns and trends on a global scale remain: the colonial division of labour is still contributing heavily to global poverty and inequality.

Dependency theorists advocated for import substitution in peripheral countries, and in some cases a complete delinking from the global capitalist economy. As we will see in the next chapter, 'delinking' is a concept that Latin American decolonial scholars still use, but today it has a very different meaning. Mignolo, Quijano and others who use the term refer not to a break with any material or unified system, but with a way of thinking. Rather than identifying colonialism as a world system, these latter scholars see the very idea of a totalising and universally unfolding world history as colonial. In the next chapter, I argue instead for a decentralised and capillary understanding of power in all its forms.

GVC analysis has attempted to remedy the over-generalising tendencies of dependency theory by focusing on individual value chains and the distribution of value-added within them. Unlike the *dependencistas* who wanted systemic and centralised change, GVC analysts are interested in upgrading particular firms, or at most a particular sector within one country or region. Here a change for a single firm is seen as meaningful: we do not need to alter the entire 'system' at once in order to achieve political change. Far from delinking from the capitalist world economy, GVC analysis is a tool for understanding the ways in which integration into the world economy can be beneficial. If a peripheral company can upgrade and get access to more egalitarian governance structures, engagement in international trade is seen as desirable.

While many aspects of GVC analysis are appealing, this thesis also critiques it and points out some of its limitations. One of the fundamental aims of this thesis, as we saw in chapter 1, is to make an intervention into the GVC literature. The first step of my intervention is to highlight the failure of the vast majority of this literature to critique and move beyond prevailing modern-capitalist assumptions about what the economy and development are or could be. As we will see in the following chapter, development is not always the same as, or even dependent upon, economic upgrade, increased wealth or industrialisation. Furthermore, while the concept of social upgrade takes workers' life conditions into account, this concept is limited since it assumes – and renders more palatable – a capitalist organisation of production that is inherently exploitative. The second step of my intervention is to show that, and how, GVC analysts can and should pay attention to non-capitalist forms of economy, and to propose the concept of 'voice

upgrade' as a tool for moving beyond modern-capitalist and econocentric assumptions about the aims and purpose of production.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Methods

3-1. INTRODUCTION

The last chapter outlined some of the core debates in the field to which this thesis aims to add. We found an analysis of world trade inequalities and a discussion of how the colonial division of labour can be counteracted. This chapter builds the foundation for my critique of those perspectives and strategies, as well as for the ways in which we can find different solutions. Rather than opposing GVC analysis outright, this thesis aims to show its limitations and to suggest ways forward.

This chapter has two main parts. The first part lays out my theoretical framework. Here I discuss ontological perspectives on power and hierarchy. At the centre of my theoretical framework is the notion of a colonial matrix of power; a complex of oppressive patterns in society operating in interconnected ways along different axes. The heuristic device of the colonial matrix is the product of two fundamental ontological assumptions: firstly, I draw on Foucault's capillary and productive interpretation of power. While many have understood power more narrowly as a resource through which people can influence others (e.g. Weber 1978 [1922]), Foucault's view of the concept is broader and implies that power not only is used by people but also constitutes us and our actions (Foucault 1983). Connected to this, Foucault saw power not as emanating from one central headquarter, but as existing everywhere and being performed by everybody. Secondly, I deploy a pluriversal, rather than universal, ontological standpoint. Whereas dependency theory and GVC analysis have interpreted poverty and inequality as something exclusively economic, as a lack of access to money, I present a broader interpretation, paying attention to not only economics but other aspects of human interaction too. I focus on three axes: Eurocentrism/colonialism, androcentrism/patriarchy, and capitalocentrism/capitalism. My argument is that inequalities in global value chains must be interpreted through this colonial matrix rather than through a monologic of capitalism.

After outlining my ontological perspectives I apply the ontological critique of economism to the concept of value, which is one of the core concepts of this thesis. If economic inequalities are not simply about who gets money and who does not, then what becomes the meaning of value? Here I suggest that value is in fact a concept over which different actors struggle. I argue that value is not a technical economic operation but a political question: how and why should we produce? What is a fair division of work and wealth?

These are not questions that can be answered by GVC analysts' economic theories, rather, they are questions over which people struggle in their everyday lives. Following on from the discussion of value I argue that we must pay attention to voice, understood as people's ability to speak and listen about value.

Towards the end of the first part of this chapter, I turn from the interpretation of power and domination in political economy to the scope for resisting and subverting it. I argue that, if power is understood as capillary, then the creation of behaviours and institutions that refuse to comply with the colonial matrix of power in the here and now are meaningful and effective strategies for disentangling hierarchical patterns in global economic relations. Subversive acts are no longer necessarily about attacking the state or any other allegedly centralised bastion of power. I draw on the work of Richard J. F. Day who argues in favour of the 'politics of the act' (2005). Unlike what he calls the 'politics of demand', Day argues, politics of the act acknowledges the decentralised nature of power and focuses on building desired relations and institutions in the here and now – rather than demanding the state or other elite institutions to bring about the desired society on our behalf.

The second main part of the chapter turns to my empirical methodology. Foucault's interpretation of power as productive and dispersed informs my decision to study my case studies through qualitative interviews, observation and written documents. This follows Foucault and others in his wake who studied what he called the micro-politics of power: since power is reproduced everywhere and by everyone, it is as important to study what the people involved in my cases say and do in the everyday as it is to study their formal organisational structures, distribution of money, etc. I outline and critically discuss my empirical methods and reflect on some limitations.

Taken together, this chapter provides the analytical and methodological grounding for this thesis.

3-2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3-2.1 Introduction

This thesis sets out to understand *how and to what extent prefigurative trading projects, especially those focusing on counteracting the colonial division of labour, can create egalitarian economies across North/South divides*. My answer to this research question is rooted in an interpretation of the ontology of power as, firstly, dispersed and productive; and secondly, as plurilogical, i.e. as consisting of several axes of power rather than a

single social logic or structure. In analysing whether my case studies can create egalitarian economies I make use of the concepts entanglement and disentanglement. I have borrowed these notions from an article by Catherine Walsh (2010), which displayed an interest similar to mine but in a completely different setting: Ecuador's new *'buen vivir'* development paradigm. Her subject of study is rather different from ours, but we can learn from her approach. She asks: 'to what measure does the new paradigm [...] in Ecuador suggest a disentanglement of the colonial matrix of power? Or does all this rather suggest a new more complicated envelopment and entanglement?' (p. 20).

The very notion that we can look at a given example of an 'alternative' institution, action or discourse – whether one country's adoption of a constitution that diverges from the Western development paradigm in Walsh's case, or a trading company's attempt to conduct egalitarian trade across colonial borders in mine – and ask to what extent this example constitutes a break with particular constellations of power, presupposes the view that power is not centralised. It is when we see the reproduction of power as happening everywhere that we can see specific constructions of alternatives as influential and important. I explicate this view in the subsequent section.

Connected to the capillary view of power, seeing power as multifarious and complex leads to a rejection of monological analyses of power in any given situation. In other words, I use a plurilogical framework for analysing my cases. Due to limitations of space I stylise my framework along three axes, capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. Influenced by the literature Walsh's article is one contribution to, I refer to this constellation as the colonial matrix of power (Quijano 2000; Grosfoguel 2007; Mignolo 2011; Gibson-Graham 2006a). This constellation is the focus of section 3-2.3.

Returning to Walsh's question, then, we can modify it slightly: in what ways do my case studies demonstrate a disentanglement of global economic activity from the colonial matrix of power? Do they in some ways also suggest a new, more complicated envelopment and entanglement? Furthermore, what is the significance of any disentanglement for the rest of the colonial matrix – is it affected or unaffected by disentanglement? The theoretical framework needed for answering these questions must address two areas: firstly, it must outline an understanding of what power is and how it works in global political economy. That discussion is sub-divided into four parts: an overview of Foucault's capillary conception of power, a critique of the monologic of capitalism, an application of these ideas to the notion of value, and a brief consideration of the notion of voice. My aim in these four sub-sections is to sketch out the most basic patterns of power and domination in global economic relations.

Secondly, after outlining the colonial matrix against and within which my case studies struggle, I turn to the question of whether disentanglement is possible. Can we act outside of the colonial matrix, and how? As we will see, the questions of what the colonial matrix 'is' and how to disentangle from it are strongly interlinked and co-dependent.

3-2.2 The Ontology of Power

One of the most influential thinkers in the last fifty years has been Michel Foucault, who spent most of his career analysing power. I will not here outline all of Foucault's thoughts on power or the evolution of his thought, but I will draw together some of his most influential and relevant ideas. Foucault himself tended to write about power in particular settings – a specific school, a particular asylum or prison – rather than in the abstract. He was averse to *theorising* or *generalising* from these particular situations since, similarly to the decolonialists, he was suspicious of universalising and totalising discourses. Summarising Foucault's views on power in the abstract is therefore a little distorting, but it is useful to tie them together into a theoretical framework for understanding how power works in specific contexts.

Foucault is widely recognised for his capillary view of power. In more traditional views, power is often seen as something that emanates from a central authority, such as the state or economic elites, and is exercised by them over the rest of the population (e.g. Mills quoted in Lukes 2005: 2). Foucault, however, sees power not as something that is simply imposed on people, but that is enacted by everybody in society (Foucault 1978: 93; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 186). Like in capillary blood vessels, power flows back and forth through a network of channels – instead of a single tube, the capillary is dispersed and web-like. However, that power is dispersed is not to say that power is equally distributed is society or works in everybody's favour – for example, business leaders and politicians have more advantageous positions and benefit more from prevailing power arrangements than, say, seasonal agricultural labourers or the unemployed. But it does point out that power relations are things that need everybody's participation in order to exist. If we did not all understand and deploy social or linguistic tropes and roles; if we did not take our place in a division of labour; if we did not accept the rule of existing elites etc, prevailing hierarchies would not be able to exist.

The essence of this idea is not something radically new. Antonio Gramsci famously outlined his theory of hegemony in the 1930s, arguing that states and elites cannot simply rely on physical force in order to rule over the masses successfully – they also need to cultivate *consent*, making the masses believe they want to be ruled, or more

precisely, propagating a culture in which their rule is desirable to most people (Gramsci 1971; Bates 1975; Day 2005: 62-65). Gramsci's hegemony, however, is still a model where power emanates from the top, where elites construct consent from the masses. For Foucault, on the contrary, power originates everywhere. Power is not only created in government buildings or boardrooms, but rather we are all (re)creating it all the time and in all places.

> Between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between everyone who knows and every one who does not, there exist relations of power which are not purely and simply a projection of the sovereign's great power over the individual' (Foucault 1980: 187, quoted in Kumar 2007: 11).

Furthermore, Foucault did not see power relations as controlled or designed. As Dreyfus and Rabinow explain (1983: 187), Foucault did see power as 'intentional' in the sense that everybody who exercises it does so in pursuit of an interest, maybe even an aim, but these exercises of power are all decentralised, there is no subject sitting at the hub of these actions planning the larger-scale trajectory of power. Dreyfus and Rabinow use power-exercising politicians and pressure groups as an example:

> The fact that individuals make decisions about specific policies or [that] particular groups jockey for their own advantage does not mean that the overall activation and directionality of power relations in a society implies a subject. When we analyze a political situation, "the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them […]". […] The objective emerged historically, taking particular forms and encountering specific obstacles, conditions and resistances. Will and calculation were involved. The overall effect, however, escaped the actors' intentions, as well as those of anybody else'. (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 187, quote from Foucault's History of Sexuality).

There is thus, in this view, no control room from which power relations are centrally steered. Neither, however, are actors free to make up social relations from scratch. Assumptions, norms and regulations become roads on which our thoughts and actions can travel – as Judith Butler put it, gender (but the point goes equally for power relations in general) is 'a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time' (Butler 1990: 33). Actions and thoughts in history come to limit and shape actions we can take and thoughts we can have today. And oftentimes, most influential on our behaviour is not the physical matter that surrounds us or makes us up, but ideas and interpretations. This renders analysis of the existing ideas, practices and assumptions of domination that my case studies attempt to subvert a key part of understanding their

subversion.

According to Foucault, thus, power saturates all social relations and interactions, it is everywhere and influences everything. When we look at society from a zoomed-out macro point of view we can see patterns and trends, but there is no spider in the web manipulating the trajectory of social relations. Rather than power relations being planned and designed in elite meeting rooms, power is constantly recreated everywhere and all the time. Therefore, studying power means studying its production and reproduction at every instance. Indeed, Foucault wanted to write a micro-physics of power, describing and analysing power relations in specific contexts and in detail (Foucault 1980: 39; Lukes 2005: 88).

That Foucault advocated studying the micro-physics of empirical situations (for example the shape of buildings, the specific use of language, spoken and unspoken rules, everyday lives, etc) has given rise to some discussion as to whether politics should be studied on a micro or a macro level. The most influential response to Foucault's idea of micro-physics of power came from Deleuze and Guattari in their A Thousand Plateaus (1987). Deleuze and Guattari take a very similar view to Foucault on power in general, but when it comes to micro-physics – or micropolitics as they call it – they argue that it is impossible to separate between the micro and the macro. Though they agree it is useful to point out that power works through everything we do and that focusing in on the small scale is necessary, Deleuze and Guattari disagree with Foucault's view that there is some difference between the small and large scale of politics (Deleuze 1997). As they put it, 'everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 213). In every instance, power works through both the large ('molar') and the small ('molecular'), in fact the two are in practice inseparable and interdependent (Ibid.). They use fascism as an example: 'It's too easy to be antifascist on the molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective' (Ibid. p. 215). Deleuze and Guattari's contention that capillary power works both on a macro and micro scale should not be seen so much as a criticism of Foucault as an elaboration or interpretation of his analysis.

Adopting a capillary interpretation of power has major implications for this research project. As we saw above, my research question is heavily influenced by it. As we will see below, the interest in micro-physics has led to a qualitative empirical methodology. What I will elaborate upon in the next section is how a capillary view of power influences the way in which we can analyse inequalities in global political economy more specifically. I set up a tangible framework based in part on Foucault's insights, which I call the colonial

matrix of power. In the section after that, I apply the critique of monological thinking to the notion of value.

3-2.3 The Ontology of Global Economic Relations

Since the late 19th century, economics has been seen as an independent academic science (e.g. Walras, Jevons and Menger in Sandmo 2011). A body of mainstream economic knowledge – for example, Ricardo's theorem of comparative advantage and theories of supply and demand and business cycles – has been represented as universally true. I reject, however, two basic assumptions implicit in this view: firstly, in this section I critique the monologic of economism, i.e. the assumption that economics is separate from other social forces. Secondly, in the next section I critique the monologic of value, i.e. the assumption that the values implicit in neoclassical economics are the true and universal values for all of humanity.

Bringing what are usually undiscussed assumptions about human nature to the fore, feminist geographers J. K. Gibson-Graham ponder the affective and emotional foundations of any theory (Schmitt 2010). '[I]t is possible that the most crucial aspect of our thinking is the emotional orientation we bring to it' (Gibson-Graham 2006b: xxix). We often distinguish analytically between a theory – something that can make predictions and be falsified – and a world view – something that cannot be proven true or false (Schmitt 2010). It is difficult, however, to completely separate the two: 'Theories rest on evidence but what constitutes "evidence," for instance, is determined by the underlying world view, by sets of unargued assumptions' (Ibid.). A world view determines how we interpret reality and link concepts and events together. A world view must therefore be understood as partly normative; it describes 'what is' and 'what should be' at the same time. The discussion about where we start to deduce our theories from (axioms? Emotions? God? Discourse?), which is central in philosophy, is made invisible in mainstream economics. If we lift the lid on the assumptions underlying neoclassical economics, we generally find competitive individuals acting in their own short-term interest; the *homo economicus*; the white Western hegemonic masculinity (Gibson-Graham 2006a). As I will argue below, these normative values echo those of Western 'hegemonic masculinity' with an uncanny likeness (Kimmel 1994). That humans would be inherently competitive, self-interested and short-sighted is far from a universal truth, and debates around the 'true' nature of humans (to the extent that there is one) remain deeply political. In other words, when we abandon the assumptions that make political economy appear a universal science (an exercise that can only ever be partially fulfilled as Chakrabarty 2000 points out), the economic collapses into the political (Davies 2012).

Economics was not always seen as an independent science. Many classical and traditional authors were interdisciplinary: for example, Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations was written as an addition to his earlier work on moral philosophy, The Theory of Moral Sentiments. J.S. Mill, too, was a moral philosopher. Karl Marx was a sociologist whose writings stressed the social and power-laden nature of seemingly neutral economic interactions. In the past century, however, the moral-political aspects of their work have been given less attention. What were writings on how to live well or how to achieve justice, have largely become interpreted as writings of objective and universal economic truth (Blaney and Inayatullah 2010; Hirschman 1977; Pocock 1985).

To move beyond the monologic of economism, I make use of the concept of a colonial matrix of power. This type of analytical tool emerged out of decolonial and Black feminist thought in recent decades. The specific term 'colonial matrix of power' was first introduced by decolonial theorist Aníbal Quijano (Mignolo and Escobar 2010). A term that refers to similar ideas but that is more frequently used in popular discourse is intersectionality, which was introduced by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (see also Collins 1990). I have chosen to use the concept of the colonial matrix rather than intersectionality as the former evokes more strongly the co-constitutive and co-dependent nature of each axis of oppression, and since the former is the term used by scholars in the decolonial literature from which I draw heavily (Mignolo and Escobar 2010). Colonialism is often understood in the West as predominantly driven by economic interests and a desire to find new markets and resources abroad (see e.g. Frank and Gills 1995; Trotsky in Dunn and Radice 2006). As Grosfoguel (2007) points out, however, the colonisers were not only capitalist actors, but they were also Europeans, Christians, white, military, patriarchal and heterosexual and brought with them all of those 'entangled global hierarchies' (p. 216). The term matrix refers to the idea that different logics and tendencies merge and interlink, rather than society being governed by one underlying structure or central logic.

The decolonial school of thought that Grosfoguel, Quijano and others write within could be seen as a contemporary response to the dependency school and its limitations, coming from a more radical and Latin American perspective than GVC analysis generally does. As we saw in the previous chapter, GVC analysis responded to some criticisms of dependency theory and world systems theory, especially criticisms around its generalisations over-emphasis on structures. GVC analysis, however, as I will argue below and in subsequent chapters, has remained rooted in the capitalocentrism that decolonial scholars reject.

Quijano and others see the colonial matrix of power as having four inter-related domains: economy, authority, gender/sexuality and knowledge/subjectivity (Mignolo 2011: 8). These could be understood as basic hierarchies that constitute social domination. For the purposes of this thesis these domains – as well as Grosfoguel's list of entangled hierarchies just cited and the collective work of intersectional feminist and anti-racist scholars (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2000; Kandaswamy 2012) – can be stylised into what we can call three axes: *capitalocentrism/capitalism, Eurocentrism/colonialism, and androcentrism/patriarchy*. These are the three domains my case studies directly address and struggle within. Knowledge, meanwhile, is the domain of this thesis and our discourse about the cases.

Rather than an attempt to map all types of domination in all societies and situations, this is a particular framework for understanding the cases and topics at hand here; that is, alternative economic relations that span across the globe. Had this thesis studied something other than alternative trading and political economy, other stylisations of the colonial matrix of power might have been more useful. For example, had the focus been the study of the genocide in Rwanda it may have been more useful to focus on religion and racism as axes of power. This stylisation should thus not be understood as a claim to any final map of human interaction, but merely as a useful framework for elucidating the politics of alternative trading.

Capitalocentrism. As well as representing itself as scientific, neoclassical economics attempts to construct its own taken-for-granted economic model, capitalism, as the only viable economic one; as the only one that truly exists today; and as the one that everything exists inside of (Gibson-Graham 1993). J. K. Gibson-Graham dedicate much of their work to questioning these assumptions and instead interpreting capitalism 'not as something large and embracing but as something partial, as one social constituent among many [...]' (Ibid. p. 18). Capitalism, in this view, becomes one economic model – or one set of economic models – among many.

The rejection of the assumptions that capitalism is one coherent system, is the only system, and encompasses everything on earth, reveals an entirely different analysis. Rejecting 'capitalocentrism', Gibson-Graham highlight the diversity of forms of economic production and reproduction that people are engaging in (2006a). Bearing in mind that non-market transactions (gifts, barter, exchange, borrowing, etc) and unpaid work (housework, volunteering, favours, labour exchange, childcare) account for well over half of the world's economic activity, and that far from all firms in the world are organised according to a capitalist model (i.e. with a distinction between owners and workers, with a profit motive, etc), it becomes clear that non-capitalist forms of economy

are not only possible but commonplace (Gibson-Graham 2006a; 2008: 615, 617).

Critics might call J.K. Gibson-Graham's narrow conception of capitalism into question. Many marxists would argue that capitalism should be understood as a broader social system rather than as a narrow economic model – a system that includes non-competitive, non-waged, non-market and other economic relations that are not immediately obviously capitalist (see e.g. Castree 1999).

This line of criticism is based on a disagreement regarding ontology. A key assumption underlying J. K. Gibson-Graham's narrow conception of capitalism is that such categories construct, rather than describe, the objects they name (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxix). In this view, capitalism does not have an extra-discursive or extra-analytical existence: it is by naming and classifying it that capitalism acquires a coherent identity. J. K. Gibson-Graham think of the 'social representation [as] *constitutive* of the world' (Ibid., emphasis in original). On the contrary, however, many (realist) marxists would argue that capitalism and other social structures exist and take shape regardless of human beliefs, discourses and analyses of them (see e.g. Bhaskar 1989). For many, 'reclaiming' (Ibid.) the independent ontological existence of oppressive structures has been important in providing an analytical foundation for anticapitalist critique. Castree (1999: 145) argues that Gibson-Graham's rejection of realism leads to an ontological relativism: if capitalism does not have a real and independent existence, then how can marxists critique it and persuasively claim it is the source of inequality and oppression?

Famously, such fundamental ontological disagreements cannot be settled conclusively since neither empirical nor theoretical evidence can prove which ontological perspective is the correct one. We are left, therefore, to choose our perspective on the basis of what is most *useful* (whether strategically/politically or analytically), rather than on the basis of what is *real.* Indeed, Gibson-Graham describe their approach as a 'strategy' (2006b: 1-23) and invite the reader to join them in discovering what new political possibilities open up as a result of rethinking capitalism and rejecting capitalocentrism. This thesis makes use of this strategy and conceives of capitalism as a narrow concept, an economic model, that intersects with other logics of power.

Eurocentrism. Radical postcolonial and decolonial theorists have long argued that Western economic science, like other sciences, has developed through colonialism not only chronologically but also in substance (Quijano 2007; Charusheela and Zein-Elabdin 2004). Economics originated at a time when European elites were in need of an explanation for why their ways of life were better than others', and thus how colonial conquest, exploitation and violence abroad, as well as local inequalities at home, could

be justified (Blaney and Inayatullah 2010). For example, David Ricardo's economic theorem of comparative advantage, which 'proves' that countries should specialise on the export goods they can produce most efficiently and import everything else, is one part of a scientific codification of the moral ideas of individualism, competition, the valuation of efficiency and rationality above emotions, and so forth – ideas that informed and (in the minds of colonisers) justified Europe's so-called 'civilising mission'.

Many classical authors, Smith included, explicitly linked their economic writings to broader questions of how to live a good life. Colonial exploits on other continents were not merely contemporaneous, but heavily influenced their writing. Many authors wrote their theories directly in opposition to a constructed unfortunate Other. Blaney and Inayatullah describe this phenomenon:

> The West, Trouillot explains, constructs itself in relation to a complex other. On one side, "the savage" serves as exemplary of an early state of humankind, against which modern progress is measured and vindicated. On the other, the savage is only possible as set against the "West" as a "utopian projection," a "universalist" and "didactic" project. If anthropology came to fill "the Savage Slot" in the "field of significance" that constitutes the "West," as Trouillot emphasizes, we suggest that what might be called the "Utopian Slot" comes to be filled mostly by political economy.
> (2010: 16)

This claim should be understood not only as an analysis of political economy itself, but also of its role in the colonial project, and in society at large. Political Economy was, and is, not only a science but also a core element of what sets apart the West from the colonies. Adam Smith and many others constructed the image of the colonised Other as *pre*-modern, that is to say, not yet as fully fledged and successful as the West, as part of a larger project to trace the development of the human species as a whole (Blaney and Inayatullah 2010: 40). Working in conjunction with anthropological science, especially reading work by Father Joseph François Lafitau (Ibid. p. 29), Smith's economics showed how colonised cultures were in an earlier stage of human development, one that European societies had already lived through and overcome, and one that was far inferior. According to Smith, humans are naturally disposed to seek continual progress (i.e. modernity), so a society that has not achieved such progress is less refined and backward. This stagism is still central to the development discourse, and today its overt normative and moralising element has become covert: Smith is most often studied as an economist, not as a moral philosopher.

To be developed is today predominantly understood as something economic:

governments and international development agencies predominantly measure countries' GDP, economic growth and trade indicators (e.g. Rotberg 2013; Cameron 2011). More recently the UN has also started measuring 'human' indicators such as life expectancy, education, physical health and reductions in gender discrimination (UNDP HDR 2014). This is an improvement on its previous measurements, though the extent to which these indicators move beyond econometrics is limited. Furthermore, notions of the development ladder (Chang 2003; Sachs 2005: 24) and developing countries lagging behind (Rostow 1990) are still commonplace – indeed, the entire notion of 'development' embodies just these assumptions. While the development discourse has improved lives for millions, it has also retained the problematic logic by which the modern-capitalist way of life is placed at the top of a ladder and colonised societies are placed towards the bottom.

Androcentrism. Both capitalocentrism and Eurocentrism are analogous to, and overlap with, what feminists and postcolonial theorists call androcentrism (or phallocentrism). Androcentrism is the patriarchal assumption that masculinity and men are at the centre of society and that the things masculine people do is what really matters (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 35). What underlies and enables this logic is a binary gender model: at birth we are categorised (usually only culturally and institutionally, but sometimes also surgically) as having either a female or male sex, and assigned a corresponding gender: feminine (girl/woman) for females and masculine (boy/man) for males (Kimmel 2008). The normative links between femaleness/femininity and maleness/masculinity have become more flexible in urban Western societies in recent decades: females can now be masculine and man-like in certain ways without facing legal or cultural punishment, for example they can have professional careers, wear suits and carry out rational and calculating jobs in traditionally exclusively male industries (Peterson 1992: 45). Males can also, to a smaller extent, be more feminine, for example stay at home with children and carry out feminine housework and care work. This cross-categorical flexibility has, however, done little to destabilise the fundamental binary wherein masculinity/man is the dominant position and femininity/woman is the subordinated one (Connell 1995: 71).

There are many forms of masculinity in a given context, the hegemonic one being momentarily the most successful, dominating other masculinities and femininities through either force or complicit consent (Connell 1995; Brod 1994). This means that it is difficult to make general statements about what traits are associated with masculinity as opposed to femininity. This is especially the case when we look at different cultures and countries. However, while we should remain open to fluctuations and variations, it is still possible to detect certain behavioural patterns. Most feminists agree that in

contemporary urban Western society the hegemonic masculinity is characterised by, among others, wealth, self-reliance, physical and mental strength, aggression and competitiveness – in other words, things that are emblematic of or instrumental to hierarchical power (Kimmel 1994: 125; Hooper 2001: 3). The corresponding femininity is characterised by disempowered/ing features such as nurturing, sociability, fragility, compliance, sexual objectification, etc (Connell cited in Kimmel 2008: 10). These generalisations are also of some relevance when speaking of colonised regions since European colonisers imposed new gender models influenced by (but different from) their own (Stoler 1989; Lugones 2010). The most important aspect of the definition of masculinity and femininity, however, is their circular and mutually exclusive function: masculinity is predominantly defined as *not*-femininity, while femininity is stressed as *not*-masculinity (Kandiyoti 1994: 198).

Androcentrism means that discourses, institutions and policies are centred on activities that traditionally concern men. For example, 'national security' generally concerns threats to masculine people or the state – war, terrorism, geopolitics – and not threats that feminine or genderqueer people more often face – domestic violence, rape, harassment, poverty, socio-cultural domination – even though the deaths and injuries resulting from the latter are far more numerous (Tickner 1992). Similarly, mainstream economic literature has distinguished between the productive sphere – the sphere of paid employment, usually in a workplace outside the home – and the so-called reproductive one – housework, care and community building. These spheres map the traditional gendered division of labour in urban Western society, and notably it is the so-called productive sphere that modern writers have designated as economic (Butler 1998; Gibson-Graham 2006a: 64).

Framing the anticapitalist-anticolonial-feminist critique of political economy in terms of the concepts capitalocentrism, Eurocentrism and androcentrism is particularly useful because it allows us to assess the validity of neoclassical political economy without making universalist ontological claims. Rather than attempting to produce new universal knowledge about any eternal nature of the economy, the perspectives I have summarised here highlight the fact that our claims about reality are heavily influenced by our interests and points of view. In other words, the important insight about neoclassical political economy is not that it is wrong or right, but that it is written from the perspective of powerful white propertied men. Consequently, it works in the interests of white rich men and it aims to solve their problems. Egalitarian and liberatory perspectives bring other questions and problems to the table and enable new insights to emerge. I aim to show in this thesis that my theoretical framework enables a more multifaceted and broader view of political economy than conventional capitalocentric,

Eurocentric and androcentric frameworks.

It is nevertheless important to keep in mind that constructed 'truths' have very real feedback effects. That the alleged inevitability of Western dominance, capitalism, and patriarchal gender divisions rest on ideological rather than objective grounds is not to say that everybody in the world makes free and open choices about whether to engage in them (Spivak 1985: 83). Statistics on global poverty, the global division of labour, gender oppression and racism describe real patterns in the world whereby the majority are not only silenced and denied cultural authority, but are also overworked and physically excluded from wealth, food, bodily integrity, education and health care. As Spivak puts it, 'it is possible to put the economic text "under erasure", to see, that is, the unavoidable and pervasive *importance* of its operation and yet to question it as a concept of the *last resort*' (1985: 85, original emphasis). We will see that the actors in the cases studied in this thesis both reject and take part in these three oppressive models.

The colonial matrix of power is a heuristic device that is increasingly used in social theory to critique inter-related forms of power and domination (e.g. Butler 1990; Mignolo 2011; Walsh 2010). In this thesis the concept helps us to make sense of the ways in which capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy interact with each other to co-constitute global economic relations. This is not to say that economic relations are *only* capitalist, colonial and/or patriarchal. As Foucault pointed out, power is complex and multi-logical. There are many forms and expressions of power that do not derive from these three hierarchical strands of matrix. My concern in this thesis is with trading activities that, in as much as possible, disentangle these three hierarchical strands and instead dedicate space to egalitarian relations.

The critical study of Eurocentrism, capitalocentrism, androcentrism and their feedback effects is a rather different approach to the study of egalitarian trade than the approaches taken by either dependency theory or GVC analysis. As we saw in the previous chapter, these perspectives have revolved around the colonial division of labour: Dependency theorists have argued for a delinking from the global capitalist economy and GVC analysts have attempted to distinguish good cases of integration into global capitalist value chains from bad ones. What my discussion here has showed, however, is that combating global inequalities is not such a strictly economic task. In order to make this point more tangible and specific to GVC analysis, I will now apply my argument to the concept that sits at its heart: value. 'Value-added' is what GVC analysts seek to increase for peripheral firms though upgrade, but when we ask critical questions around what value is and according to whom, GVC analysis gives capitalocentric, Eurocentric and androcentric answers.

3-2.4 Value

The notion of value has long sat at the heart of discussions of political economy. This section traces key insights from selected discussions of value that help us to make sense of the ways in which our case studies disentangle and remain entangled in the colonial matrix. I will start by critiquing the treatment of the concept of value in the GVC literature. I argue that the debate around the colonial division of labour is dominated by a monologic of value and that this literature must do more to reject capitalist exploitation. After that critique, I turn to sources that have offered more progressive insights on the concept. Marx used the conception of value as labour time to highlight the exploitative nature of capitalism, as well as to emphasise the inseparability of politics and economics. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak later added to Marx's analysis by querying the homogeneity of a social category such as a class. While recognising the importance of acknowledging broad patterns of oppression, Spivak advocated a focus on the (in)ability of different people to make their own voices heard. This leads us at the end of this section to the proposition that value should – in one sense – be understood as voice.

Despite its name giving the opposite impression, Global Value Chains analysis has focused little of its attention to deeper or critical analysis of how the concept 'value' should be understood (Taylor 2010). This tendency goes back to GVC's predecessor, Global Commodity Chains (GCC) analysis. From the start, GCC analysis highlighted the notion of value-added, studying the ways in which the production of high-value, as opposed to low-value, products affected the wealth – and prospects for future increases in wealth – of different firms. High-value products were in this literature understood as products that require higher skills in their production, and that offer higher pecuniary returns. As Appelbaum et al (1994: 191) put it:

> Following Gereffi (1992), we operationalize value-added as the per-unit export value of the final product. Other things being equal, we reason, a more expensive commodity reflects high-skilled production (as well as greater opportunity for profit-taking) than a less expensive one.

'Value-added' is a term borrowed from Accountancy literature that refers to the financial value of a firm's output minus the inputs – in other words, the amount of money that is added to a good's price by any actor in the value chain (Deardorff 2016). While the relationship between 'value-added' and 'value' in this literature remains unspecified by GCC authors, there is a clear connection between the two: in an earlier article Gereffi and Korzeniewicz wrote of value in terms of economic rents (1990) commonly understood in

terms of pecuniary income (Kaplinsky 1998), and rather similar to the notion of 'value-added'.

In the GCC literature, thus, value can be interpreted as being related to price, profitability, and high-skilled labour. This is an uncritical understanding of the concept that draws on Business Studies literature, and in particular Michael Porter's influential value chain framework, designed to help businesses increase productivity and profit (Porter 1985). Porter understood value as 'what buyers are willing to pay for a product or service' (Ibid. pp. xvi and 3), which would be measured by 'total revenue' (Ibid. p. 38).

The GVC perspective was developed out of GCC to better suit the analysis of more complex chains, and chains that do not necessarily trade in commodities (Global Value Chains.org 2016). Perhaps the most important difference between GVC and GCC is that the former draws to a somewhat greater extent on Sociology and Political Science, and places a greater emphasis on power (Sturgeon 2009). '[T]he term *value* both captured the concept of "value-added" [...] and focused attention on the main source of economic development: the application of human effort, often amplified by machines, to generate returns on invested capital' (Sturgeon 2009: 117, emphasis in original). This should be interpreted as a nod to marxist labour theory of value (more of which below), but also as a broader shift towards recognising social and political aspects of economic behaviour.

Drawing less on Business Studies and Economics, and more on Sociology and Political Science, GVC analysis opens up a space for authors who question the extent to which the profit-motive takes precedence over social relationships between people and firms: firms may choose business partners based on trust, social networks or goodwill rather than on price (Sturgeon 2009: 120). In connection with this, GVC analysis developed and expanded the framework of what Gereffi had called governance. Whereas Gereffi's GCC framework had focused on the drivers of chains (for example buyer vs. producer-driven chains) the GVC framework developed a richer typology for understanding how power relations are shaped, vary and shift between different nodes in a chain (Gereffi et al 2005). Rather than reading power relations as either stemming from the dominant downstream or the dominant upstream firm, the richer typology of GVC governance rendered visible the strategies that firms deploy to negotiate power in value chains (Sturgeon 2009).

The extent to which this new attention to sociological and political factors reshaped GVC's understanding of value is, however, limited. Gereffi et al (2001: 5-6) proposes one of the literature's few explicit definitions of value:

> There are several metrics that have been used to try to assess value in global chains:
>
> - Profits. […] The most appropriate measure is generally return on capital employed […].
> - Value added. […] Value-added shares can be calculated for different links in the chain. For example, a dress selling at $100 in the United States might break down into $6 going to workers, $9 to the contractor, $22.50 for fabric, $12.50 for the manufacturer, and $50 to the retailer. […]
> - Price markups. […]

It can be seen that value measured in pecuniary terms remains central and therefore, read on its own, this understanding differs very little from that of GCC. There is little acknowledgement of the role that power struggles and social relations play in constituting productive relations between and within firms. Aside from this definition, the GVC literature has very little critical discussion of the concept of value and the attention paid to politics and social relations has not transferred from GVC conceptions of governance to its conceptions of value or value upgrade.

This is not to argue that *all* perspectives in this family of literatures rely on conventional conceptions of value or fail to discuss the meaning of the concept. Notably, the framework of Global Production Networks (GPN) was developed by scholars, largely coming from geography and economic geography backgrounds, alongside and as a response to GCC. This perspective critiqued GCC's lack of acknowledgement of the importance of spatiality, and especially regional (as opposed to national) economic development and the formation of regional industrial clusters (Coe et al 2004). While the chain analogy implies only vertical integration of firms, the concept of a network also highlights the horizontal linkages between firms in a region (Sturgeon 2000). Some would argue that the GPN approach differs very modestly from GCC in practice, however the emphasis on spatiality is a distinct theoretical difference (Bair 2009). The concept of value in the GPN approach is defined by Coe et al (2004: 473):

> Here we use the term 'value' to refer to various forms of economic rent (Kaplinsky 1998) that can be realized through market as well as non-market transactions and exchanges. Alongside value creation through the labour process, for instance, value can take the form of technological rents by way of access to particular product or process technologies, or may be manifested as relational rents, based on inter-organizational links improving know-how transfer and collective learning. Other forms of rent identified by Kaplinsky may derive from organizational attributes, trade policy and branding.

Unlike GCC authors, Coe et al stress the multiplicity and transmutability of forms of value and emphasise that it not only relates to high-skilled productive abilities, but also encompasses a broader set of advantages and resources including: technological capabilities, social and economic links to other firms and ownership of a well-regarded brand name. Nevertheless, this interpretation remains within an economistic frame.

As value chain literatures have grown in prominence, critical GVC scholars have intervened to broaden the literature's concerns in relation to value. Rainnie et al (2011) called for value chains literatures to integrate labour as a central aspect of their analysis (p. 161):

> [I]f commodity chain analysis is about value creation, capture and enhancement, then labour, as the ultimate source of value, logically must lie at its heart and the dynamics of a labour process's modus operandi, with its contested and contradictory practices relating to the extraction (and realization) of surplus value, needs to be central to any explanation.

Taylor et al (2013) point to the continuing 'labour "deficit"' in the GVC literature (2013), and argue that value has been so poorly defined in GVC and related literatures that the concept is often meaningless. Selwyn (2013) critiques the concept of social upgrade and highlights that GVC analysts have tended to view upgrade from a firm-centric, rather than labour-centric, perspective. In this critical perspective labour is understood both as a source of value, and as a class with political agency (Rainnie et al 2011: 161; Taylor et al 2013). The ILO's *Decent Work Agenda*, which has informed and influenced prevalent writing on social upgrade, falls short of the core marxist observation that wage labour is characterised by exploitation as an objective set of relations. According to Marx, the owners of a capitalist firm appropriate surplus value from their workers by forcing the latter to work for free for a portion of the working day, as the workers create more output than they are remunerated for (Marx 2015 [1887]; Harvey 2010). The ILO and prevalent GVC writing on social upgrade, however, do not classify the capitalist relationship as exploitative and are therefore unable to fully comprehend the root cause of indecent work (Selwyn 2013: 82).

This body of literature draws attention to the fact that improvements to workers' conditions largely are a result of workers' struggles rather than any spontaneous generosity from above (Selwyn 2013; Hedberg 2013). Social upgrade is best thought of not as something that firm owners hand out to their workers, but rather as something that workers win through collective action:

> [W]ithout arrangements that commit capital to providing benefits to labour, there is no reason why individual capitalists would choose to do so (even if they wanted to) as their

> actions would represent a cost, thus potentially handing competitive advantage to their rivals in the market. However, what the *Decent Work Agenda* and, so far, the social upgrading framework ignores, is that such institutional arrangements are themselves often outcomes of and/ or responses to real or potential struggles between capital and labour.
> (Selwyn 2013: 83)

For these authors, which are still on the fringes of the GVC school, value is not an apolitical or merely numerical notion, but a concept inherently linked to a critique of capitalist exploitation. My argument in this section is that these authors are moving in the right direction in their critique of GVC. The rest of this section will outline the theoretical underpinnings of their marxist critique, and will also proceed to make new connections between decolonial critique of GVC analysis.

The period after the Enlightenment, in which political economy was established as an academic field, saw much debate on the question of what makes products valuable. Why does, for example, a train carriage have more value (which is usually, but not always, expressed through a higher exchange-value or price) than an apple? Early political economists such as Smith and Ricardo argued that value stems from the amount of labour required to produce a commodity: a train carriage is more valuable than an apple because it took many more hours of labour to produce it (Fine 1989: 8-10).

Marx added to these ideas by drawing attention to the fact that, in capitalism, labour is used to create exchange-value (i.e. money) for capitalists, rather than to create use-value for the labourers or anyone else. Whereas non-capitalist economies may exchange commodities for other commodities in barter (illustrated by Marx as C-C, i.e. commodity for commodity), or commodities for other commodities via the exchange medium of money (C-M-C), the point of a capitalist enterprise is not to acquire new use-values per se, but rather to acquire more exchange-value (M-C-M'). In other words, capitalists use their money to produce and sell commodities, not because they are interested in the commodity itself but because the whole affair can generate more money for them (Marx 2015 [1887]: ch 4; Harvey 2010: 88). Marx called this increased exchange-value (M') 'surplus value' (Fine 1989: 23). Since the source of a commodity's value is the labour required to produce it, this highlights the exploitative nature of capitalist production: the capitalist, who owns the means of production, hires the labour power of the labourer. In order to extract surplus value from the labourer, the capitalist pays the labourer a wage that is lower than the price paid by the customer for the product of the labourer's work (after other costs of production are subtracted). For example, if a customer pays £1 for an apple, and the tools and fertilisers needed to produce the apple cost 30 pence, the

labourer who grew and picked the apple does not receive the remaining 70 pence, but a much lower amount. Rather than paying the labourer all the money that remains after other production costs and raw material inputs have been subtracted, the capitalist pays the worker *as little as possible* and takes the rest as profit. Through such exploitation, thus, the capitalist appropriates value (i.e. work) from the labourer without paying for it in full (Marx 2015 [1887]: ch 10).

Marx's view of value is of course not immune to criticism, and economists still disagree on whether Marx's ruminations on value amount to a technical economic theory capable of, for example, predicting or explaining price levels (see e.g. Sraffa 1960; Nitzan and Bichler 2009; Kliman 2007). Some marxists argue that Marx's views on value should not be understood as a singular theory at all, but as a set of 'scenes' that are not necessarily consistent or coherent (Henderson 2013), or as one of many 'stories' about capitalism (Chambers 2014, 2016).

Marx's ruminations on value did, however, have a unified purpose. Diane Elson (1979) and David Graeber (2001: 55) both highlight the fact that Marx's intention in analysing value – unlike Ricardo's and Smith's before him – was to facilitate the toppling of capitalism. Elson shows that, regardless of whether Marx's writings on value can predict price levels, the most useful and convincing interpretation of Marx is that he sought to analyse how capitalist exploitation works, in order to lay the foundations for a political movement against it (1979).

Marx, as we saw above, was writing in an era in which economics had not yet been ostensibly segregated from politics. In the past fifty years especially, Marx's message that the exchange of goods – which appears to be a politically neutral economic exchange – is actually the exchange of labour time, which is regulated and quantifiable through an intricate set of social and political relations, has gained particular importance to critics of capitalism (see e.g. Elson 1979; Grossberg and Nelson 1988; Spivak 1985). For marxists the concept of value is central to this point since it shows that labour is what lies behind the expansion of capital and capitalist commodity exchange.

To be precise, value is not defined by Marx as the actual labour time it took an individual worker to produce an individual commodity, but as *socially necessary labour time* (Marx 2015 [1887]: ch 1; Elson 1979: 132, 134). If this were not the case, then a slow and inefficient worker would produce more value than a skilled and efficient one since their products would contain more labour time. For this reason, Marx argued that value is based on an abstract amount of necessary labour time, i.e. the average amount of time it takes a labourer of average skill to produce a commodity (Ibid.).

As an aside, it would be a mistake to take the dependence of capitalist quantifications of value on broader social conventions as evidence that capitalism is a totalising and all-embracing social system. Though it is true that the exact numerical magnitude both of a product's value and of a capitalist's exploitation of a worker becomes calculable in relation to a social average (since value is determined by socially necessary labour time and the lowest level of wages are determined by social conventions and laws around the minimum acceptable material living standard in any given society), this does not prove that capitalism is a total system rather than one economic model coexisting with others. Even under Marx's own definitions, money and price conventions existed in pre-capitalist societies and are thus not exclusively capitalist. As we saw above, the choice between a structuralist and a post-structuralist or capillary ontology is best understood as a choice based on analytical usefulness and political strategy rather than on logical or empirical evidence.

What we can usefully glean from Marx's analysis of value is thus the connection between economic quantities on the one hand and socio-political relations on the other. Aside from any quantitative calculations, Marx makes a persuasive argument on a deeper philosophical level regarding what kind of thing value is (Graeber 2001: 54-56), namely time spent by humans doing work.

We must be careful not to let this generalisation give us the false impression that all workers are therefore exploited in the same way. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has pointed out the tension between, on the one hand, the need to identify generalised patterns of oppression, and on the other, the silencing of marginalised voices that result from a homogenising analysis of those patterns (Spivak 1985; see also Castree 1996). Marx wrote from the position of a *European* and a *modern* scholar: as dependency theory and decolonial theory have shown, his assumptions about the working class cannot be sweepingly applied to the entire world. Spivak's poststructuralist critique of Marx queries the identity of the oppressed and revolutionary subject in his writing. In Scattered Speculations of the Question of Value, Spivak traces Marx's own conceptualisation of the subject – a materialist one – as well as the idealist one he opposes (1985). The latter conceives of the subject as a conscious identity that acts with intendedness on its surroundings, informed by cognitive, aesthetic and ethical values (Spivak in Harasym 1988: 53). For Marx, this conception of the subject ignored or concealed the ways in which capitalist oppression creates different subject positions. The materialist conception of the subject, therefore, draws attention to the ways in which work positions us in a social class and creates value (Ibid.; Spivak 1985).

Spivak accepts Marx's critique of idealism and capitalism, but also points to the danger in positing the proletariat as a unified class identity. Given the global division of labour and the colonial nature of international economic institutional arrangements, exploitation and class mean something different in different regions of the world (Spivak in Harasym 1988: 53-54; Spivak 1985: 84-85).

> [T]he *worker* produces capital because the worker, the container of labour power, is the source of value. By the same token it is possible to suggest to the so called "third world" that it *produces* the wealth and the possibility of the cultural self-representation of the "first world". (Spivak in Harasym 1988: 54, original emphases).

When a diverse population is analytically or politically homogenised as an ostensibly unified group, the concerns, voices and interests of those who are marginalised tend to disappear behind those who are in a better position to claim their own predicament as the predicament of the group. As a case in point, Spivak's influential essay from 1988, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', looked at the consequences for Indian women of being subsumed into one category upon the arrival of British colonisers. The British imposed several changes to Indian educational and legal systems when they seized control of Indian government, one of which was to outlaw the practice of sati/suttee (widow sacrifice). The British saw this practice as barbaric and claimed to, as she puts it, 'sav[e] brown women from brown men' (Ibid. p. 296-7). Indian nativist voices, on the other hand, argued that the practice should remain legal as it was a part of Indian native tradition and '[t]he women actually wanted to die' (Ibid.). In this debate Spivak finds that the voices of the women themselves who would be subject to sati are absent, at least from the records. None of the spaces in which this official discourse took place – the judiciary, politics or media – could provide a platform for Indian women to make their voices heard. Furthermore, Spivak's piece also goes to great lengths to show that 'Indian women' is not a coherent category that would have any unified opinion on sati.

Spivak thus shows the importance of questioning and breaking up categories along which people are said to experience oppression. Rather than assuming that we can derive logically what the interest or position of a member of a particular class will be, we must be attentive to who is able to speak. This set of insights takes us to a new conception of value: econocentric numerical representations of value conceal the social and political relations that underlie them; value is created by workers who are exploited by capitalists; though oppressed groups such as the working class are defined by some common feature they are also diverse; those within such an oppressed group who are more well-resourced tend to become the spokespeople of that group; in order to challenge oppression we must turn our attention to *voice*. Value as voice is a conception

of value that helps GVC analysts to understand and operationalise questions of decision-making in a value chain. What Marx and Spivak's treatments of value are focusing on is at its most abstract a question of *justice*: how should the economy and society be organised and who should do what work? It is because there is no apolitical or technical answer to these questions that voice is so important.

To democratise the designation of value(s), then, there must be more *speaking*, especially by people who have not historically been empowered to speak, and more *listening*, especially by people who have not historically been good at listening. (As the stakes are high, 'speaking' does not only take the form of conversational dialogue, but also other forms of political struggle and expression.) Now value-chain upgrade becomes not (only) about upgrading Southern producers' abilities to carry out higher 'value-added' jobs, but also about upgrading our collective ability – and especially that of Europeans – to go beyond capitalist-modernist-patriarchal assumptions about what good or successful social relations are altogether (Icaza and Vázquez 2013).

To be clear, I am not arguing that economistic conceptions of value can be entirely rejected. Spivak's observation that the 'economic text' has an 'unavoidable and pervasive *importance'* (Spivak 1985: 85) remains applicable. In this thesis, value is thus understood as a concept with multiple meanings: it refers, in perspectives more strongly entangled with the colonial matrix of power, to financial gain; it also, in more disentangled perspectives, refers to questions of the justice of production, i.e. questions of who should do what work and how the fruits of that work should be distributed. (There are also other sound definitions that lie outside the scope of this thesis, such as Nitzan and Bichler's (2009) conception of value as power, which is especially applicable in relation to non-productive economic activities such as finance; and Graeber's (2001, 2006) understanding of value as the importance of actions, which is especially applicable in anthropological research.)

3-2.5 Voice

As I will show, the conception of value as the justice of production has some profound consequences for our understanding of upgrade. I will revisit this issue in chapter 6, where I propose the introduction of 'voice upgrade' as an additional form of upgrading alongside economic and social upgrade. The reasoning behind focusing on 'voice' stems from the idea that questions around how people should work and distribute resources cannot be determined by any neutral arbiter or expert, but must be – and already are – subject to political negotiation.

The notion of voice has been theorised in Sociology, Anthropology and Political Economy. One of the lessons from such discussions is the difficulty of ascertaining what it means to make one's voice heard. In her studies of 'Indian women' in the debate around the outlawing of sati, Spivak draws attention to the lack of actively verbalised participation by members of said category in public discourse (Spivak 1988). Decision-makers and political elites were unable to hear the voices of Indian women, and furthermore, perhaps such a voice never existed. In his influential work on consumer communication, however, Albert Hirschman (1970) argues that actively participating in a dialogue or a market relationship is only one of two main ways to exert influence – the other way is to exit it. If a customer is unhappy with a product, they can either voice their discontent or exit the relationship. In Hirschman's terms, the customer can make use of either *voice* or *exit*.

Hirschman defines voice as:

> any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion. (1970: 30)

Meanwhile, choosing to exit a relationship – ceasing to buy a product – is at once a statement and a non-statement: while it signals some form of discontent or inability to buy a product, it also cuts off further dialogue or business relationship (Hirschman 1970: 108-9). Similarly, customers may choose to stay in the relationship whilst withholding their discontent, perhaps out of habit or because there are no viable alternative suppliers on the market (Ibid. p. 55). Voice, Hirschman suggests, is thus not something businesses can take for granted: only when customers perceive that their complaints will be heard, or for some other reason feel loyalty to a firm, will voice be a likely outcome (p. 38, 77).

As one of Hirschman's main aims is to critique the bracketing by classical economists of exit as belonging to the realm of economics, and voice as belonging to the realm of politics (which would leave the latter outside of their academic remit) – he is keen to show that his theorising of these concepts are equally applicable to political and social relationships (1970: 15). While Hirschman's work is at times impaired by unchallenged modernist assumptions (assuming, for example, that humans are consistently rational actors – see p. 39), he persuasively lays the groundwork for conceptualising speaking and the lack of speaking as interventions in economic and social relations.

Anthropologist James Scott develops the notion that the lack of voice can also be

interpreted as a type of speaking (1985). In his study of peasants in a village in Malaysia, he shows that powerless people may sometimes express their discontent in less visible or less overtly political forms for fear of repression. Rather than organising a protest or filing a complaint about extortionate rents, for example, someone with few resources and little power may choose 'what we might call *everyday* forms of peasant resistance […;] foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on' (p. xvi). These less visible or less recognisably political forms of dissent are chosen because they carry a lower risk of detection and reprisal. To openly offend one's superiors can be 'dangerous, if not suicidal' if one cannot afford to withstand the sanctions (p. xv).

These insights help us to better understand the ways in which people struggle over value, i.e. struggle over the social relations that underlie production; over questions of whom should do what work and receive what remuneration. These struggles – or expressions of voice – do not always take forms that are immediately recognisable as political in a modern and academic schema. Rather than taking the form of overt dialogue (the filing of formal requests or complaints, vocalisation in meetings, etc), voices and discontent may be expressed through 'exit', foot-dragging, feigned ignorance, etc.

As we will see in chapters 4, 5 and 6, both the Zapatistas and the workers at Bomvu and Luhlaza appear to be using these forms of expression, as well as more overt and formal forms. This fact makes it more difficult to ascertain whether and how voice has been exercised by these actors. Is, for example, the lack of response to emails from Café Libertad an exercise of voice by the Zapatistas, or is it simply an unintentional organisational or technical failure (for example, because somebody lost the password to the co-operative's computer, or because the internet connection is down)? Is such organisational or technical failure *itself* a form of voice? The answers to these questions are not straightforward.

3-2.6 Disentanglement

Accepting the critique of centralised ontology – Euro-, andro- and capitalocentric ontology in particular – is already part of a particular strategy (and the strategy is equally part of the ontology) for improving politics and the economy. In the above discussion we moved away from understanding the economy as a unified system, as well as something that is governed by one single logic. Instead, a multiple, political, and dispersed ontology is linked to an opening-up of other possibilities: if the meaning of value is contested and struggled over, we may ask ourselves what social relations we

value.

Imagining and practising meanings of value that differ from conventional meanings requires a break with the latter. To break with conventions is far from unproblematic, and contemplating such a move raises a new set of questions and considerations. I use the concept of disentanglement to refer to a break with the colonial matrix of power.

Activity that we can recognise as attempting to disentangle itself from the colonial matrix has certain self-defined rules, ideas and practices. For Walter Mignolo, the first and key step of disentangling from coloniality – what he calls *delinking* – is epistemic (Mignolo 2007). Mignolo uses the term 'delinking' rather than 'disentangling' – I have chosen to use the latter in my general discussion since 'delinking' evokes the notion of completely removing oneself from colonialism, whereas I prefer the connotations of intermingling and mess that 'disentanglement' evokes: one might witness a delinking *from* but a disentanglement *of*. Mignolo's use of 'delinking' is a reference to dependency scholars such as Frank and Dos Santos who used the phrase in the sense of a closing off from the global capitalist economy (see chapter 2). The dependencistas' delinking was economic; Mignolo's is epistemic; mine is both.

Mignolo, following Quijano and others, sees the construction of modern totalising knowledge as the foundation for modern and colonial activity. A totalising and monological ontology, as we have seen, renders certain things unthinkable: constructing capitalism as the universally desirable model defends those in power against other economic models or definitions. Delinking, then, is the shift from totality and universality to pluriversality (Ibid. p. 8). Instead of attempting to exchange one totalising world view for another, or to change the entire world for everybody in the same way, delinking from a colonial epistemology is to acknowledge a multiplicity of worlds. As Mignolo puts it, 'to change the world as it is may be an impossible task, but to build a world in which many worlds would coexist is a possible task '(2011: 54).

According to Richard J. F. Day, only prefigurative radical politics, or what he calls the 'politics of the act', can facilitate anything resembling epistemic delinking in practical politics. Day's 2005 book Gramsci is Dead distinguishes between the *politics of demand*, which is 'oriented to improving existing institutions and everyday experiences by appealing to the benevolence of hegemonic forces [that is, dominant actors such as the state, large corporations and influential NGOs] and/or by altering the relations between these forces', and the *politics of the act*, which prefigures change and alternatives in the here and now without asking anything of those in power (2005: 15, 80). The *politics of demand* is what the radical left has traditionally focused on: political strategies and aims

that focus on what the state, large corporations and IGOs should do; for example, protesting against government welfare cuts, opposing corporate malpractice through blockades and occupation, drawing media attention through stunts to pressurise political leaders to intervene against climate change. These political strategies, according to Day's typology, seek to replace the old hegemony with their own, working for mass and simultaneous social change that would involve and affect everybody within a country or region at the same time (p. 7-8). One classic example is the traditional marxist aim to take control of the state and end capitalism for everybody through mass revolution. Similarly to Mignolo, Day argues that the desire to replace one hegemony with another is stuck within the totalising way of thinking, failing to reach beyond epistemologies of domination.

On the other hand, the *politics of the act* operates without the logic of hegemony. Instead of seeking to take over state power, affect the behaviour of large corporations and IGOs or generate any other simultaneous mass change, prefigurative groups create alternatives to hegemonic and domineering thinking (Ibid. p. 90). Through a mix of tactics such as dropping out of (delinking from) existing institutions, subverting and impeding existing institutions, prefiguring non-domineering behaviour in their own activism and creating alternative institutions, these groups are able to challenge the most basic assumptions underlying totalising thinking (p. 19). For Day, these groups are able to attempt to affect 'not just the *content* of current modes of domination and exploitation, but also the *forms* that give rise to them' (p. 4).

Critical discussion of prefigurative politics in academic and political literature has largely revolved around the question of whether prefiguration is in itself sufficient for constituting a threat to the current order of domination (see e.g. Cornell 2011; Holloway 2002; Sharzer 2012; Thompson 2006). While navel-gazing prefigurativists hide away in non-hierarchically organised communes and yoga studios, so the argument goes, real people are suffering at the hands of oppression out there, and no amount of organic farming or non-violent communication training is going to change that. Cornell, Sharzer and others stress the importance of addressing structural oppression head on. As Day points out in a response to his critics (2007) however, the assumptions implicit in this critique are tethered to totalism and hegemonism. Day does indeed agree that the politics of demand can be useful to prevent suffering in the short term, for example by preventing the closure of particular health care provisions or ensuring state investment into important welfare facilities; he encourages rather than opposes such activism (Ibid.). His central point, though, is that only politics of the act can bring social change that constitutes a *radical* departure from domination. In other words, while lobbying the government to keep a hospital open is beneficial for the broader population in the short

term, it does little to end domination and hegemonism. Given a capillary interpretation of power, the only *radical* challenge activists can pose to the colonial/capitalist/patriarchal matrix is to disentangle it at multiple points, forcing the matrix to weaken and reconfigure.

In this thesis I interpret my two case studies as examples of prefigurative politics, even though most of the actors involved do not use that exact word themselves. All of the actors in my case studies conceive of themselves as creating some kind of change or alternative to conventional trading. For example, Turqle calls itself 'a food trading company with a conscience […] that enables fair and ethical export trade' (Turqle 2014c) and Café Libertad a solidarity trading collective that 'reinforc[es] the autonomous [Zapatista] movement against the government's, land owners' and the military's power' and notes that 'Another world is possible – it's up to us to start changing it!' (Café Libertad 2015). My use of the term prefigurative is thus not an imposition on their activities, but merely an analytical lens or reading, which opens for a particular type of politicisation of what these actors are doing.

Like Day and Mignolo, J.K. Gibson-Graham's work moves away from a totalising interpretation of the colonial matrix of power. Gibson-Graham strike a more constructive tone and seek to shift the focus away from the undesirable to the desirable, highlighting the idea that most human activity is not in fact capitalist (capitalism being one case in point), and dedicating much of their work to describing the non-capitalist economic relations that most humans spend at least half of their day engaging in. As well as wage labour, humans carry out unpaid housework, care work, volunteering, favours; they give gifts, give indefinite loans without interest, they share, recycle, scavenge, and so on (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Gibson-Grahams' Iceberg

(Source: Gibson-Graham 2006b: 70)

Gibson-Graham express an unwillingness to define capitalism once and for all, since its definition and interpretation is contextual (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 3 n.4). They and others, however, provide a general definition of capitalism that could be said to revolve around three main distinguishing features: 1) the *private ownership* of the means of production, and thereby the distinction between capitalists (that is, people who make a living from owning money and investing it in businesses) and labourers (that is, people who must work in order to live and who will always be paid the lowest wage possible for their labour). 2) The centrality of the *profit* motive in productive undertakings, i.e. financial surplus that accrues to the individual owners of the company, usually calculated in an annual or sub-annual time span. 3) The encouragement of *competition* in most areas of life, especially between firms and labourers within the same market (see e.g. Ibid.; Klinedinst and Rock 2009; Wolff 2006). Along with this loose definition, a caveat must be included. Capitalism – like gender (androcentrism) and colonialism (Eurocentrism), which were given something resembling a definition above – is an abstract analytical concept rather than a distinct physical entity, meaning that any definition of it is stipulative, 'made up' to serve a particular analytical purpose. The task here is not to present a universal and final definition of any of these three logics of domination.

Given J. K. Gibson-Graham's iceberg image of economies, where capitalist productive relations are only the visible part above the surface and many other types of economy lie underneath (Figure 3.1), it is clear that disentanglement is not a case of *either* opting in to *or* opting out of capitalism (or patriarchy or colonialism). Capitalism is not a closed

system that encompasses everything we do; rather, some of our economic relations are capitalist (perhaps our job and our shopping from the supermarket or high street clothing chain) and others are not (sharing food between flatmates, support of children and relatives, charitable donations, shopping from non-profit co-operatives). As we have seen, Mignolo makes the same point about delinking from coloniality (2007; 2011). He argues that to delink is to 'bring to the foreground other epistemologies, […] other economy, other politics, other ethics (2007: 453). Indeed, Mignolo shows that even the notion of Totality (for example, the modern rational mindset which sees itself as the only possible correct mindset, or capitalism which sees itself as the only possible economy) is a Western and colonial notion that has been imposed on other cultures' epistemologies (Ibid. p. 451). To refuse colonialism cannot mean to act as if it were not there or to be completely unaffected by it; by its nature colonialism imposes itself, and any delinking can only be partial. Gender studies scholars such as Michael Kimmel have made the same point about gender (Kimmel 2008). Kimmel shows that gender, far from saturating our entire personalities and bodies, and far from determining all we do in life, is something we engage in partially, and heavily dependent on context. As Judith Butler famously points out, gender is not something we are, but something we continuously perform – sometimes in accordance with norms and expectations, and other times not (Butler 1990).

A disentanglement should thus be understood as a process of becoming less involved in and dependent on the colonial matrix. Though what I am ultimately searching for is a shift ('becoming less involved'), however, my cases did not start as uncritical of domination, then subsequently shifting to attempting to disentangle themselves: rather, they have been attempting disentanglement since the start. For that reason, the task in this thesis is not to ascertain whether any particular shift has taken place during the lifespan of my cases; rather, I am investigating the struggles they find themselves in over disentanglement and value upgrade.

In the vast majority of cases, disentanglement also involves a sustained entanglement: rarely do social actors stand completely outside of patriarchal, colonial and capitalist relations – though in principle it would be possible to do so given the discussion offered so far, even if that would mean standing outside of society. Given this mixed and partial nature of entanglement it can be difficult to know whether to interpret a situation as disentangled or not. How do we know what values a prefigurative activity is prefiguring? I am not aiming to reveal any hidden or universal truths about whether or not my cases are entangled. Instead, I attempt to discuss some of the struggles they face in attempting to subvert and avoid what I have called the three axes of power. To provide some clarity and transparency on what I will be focusing on:

- Disentanglement from capitalism may involve organising production without a distinction between owner and worker, without profit and without competition as a main driving force.
- Disentanglement from patriarchy may involve moving beyond gender hierarchies, gender roles and gendered divisions of labour.
- Disentanglement from colonialism may involve moving beyond the assumptions that all societies should/will become like the West and that Western civilisation sits at the top of a global ladder.
- Disentanglement may be epistemological, shifting from a totalising to a pluriversal world view; from 'science' to politics.
- Disentanglement may be partial and temporary. It may coexist with continued entanglement.

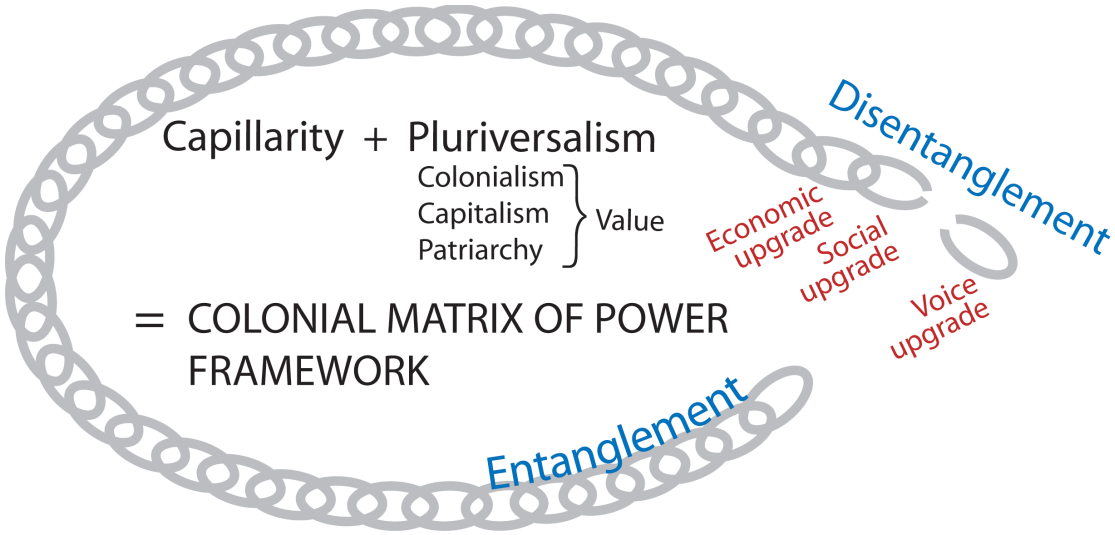
Of course, it is impossible to fully capture these forms of domination in such short sentences – I am not attempting to reach any final definition of them, or any solid list of criteria for assessing whether disentanglement is taking place. It would, however, make my analysis very difficult if I did not start with a point of reference (J.K. Gibson-Graham make a similar move in 2006a: 3 n.4).

3-2.7 Map of Concepts

My theoretical framework consists of a complex of concepts and ideas – to give the reader some clarity I will here offer an overview in brief summary. The **colonial matrix of power** is a heuristic device that is founded on two basic ontological assumptions. Firstly, that power is **capillary** rather than centralised, i.e. that power relations are constituted and reproduced by everybody all the time rather than emanate from a central institution or group. Secondly, that power relations are **pluriversal** rather than operating according to a single logic. Rather than seeing, for example, economic relations as the most fundamental power structure in our society, this view holds that several different axes of power interact and co-constitute each other. For the purposes of this thesis I have stylised these axes as colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. I have called these interacting forces the colonial matrix of power following Mignolo, Quijano and others. A central question in this thesis is whether and how our case studies manage to **disentangle** from the colonial matrix, and the extent to which they remain **entangled**. A disentanglement, or delinking as Mignolo calls it, is an action or relation that operates without invoking the logics of the colonial matrix, and/or that counteracts, subverts or destroys those logics in favour of more egalitarian ones. An entanglement is an action or relation that operates within the logic of the matrix. **Prefigurative** political action is action that intentionally attempts, as far as possible, to enact desired political ideals in

the here and now, i.e. that attempts to disentangle the matrix. Since this thesis deals with international trade and issues of political economy, I have given particular focus to the concept of **value**. Value is portrayed within capitalism as a universal, politically neural and strictly economic concept. As I have shown above, however, a critical look at the concept reveals the political nature of value: rather than fitting into any distinct economic sphere or being governed by any economic laws, value refers to the aims and purpose of our productive actions and to agreements concerning who should do how much work and how they should be remunerated. At the heart of GVC analysis is the concept of **upgrade**, which could be understood as another term for improvement or development. GVC analysis currently distinguishes between **economic upgrade** (i.e. improved financial prospects for a firm) and **social upgrade** (i.e. improved conditions for a firm's workers). Upgrade is what the prefigurative traders studied in this thesis are attempting to achieve by disentangling the matrix. My pluriversal critique of GVC analysis leads to the introduction of the novel concept of **voice upgrade**, that is, the improved ability of actors in a value chain to speak and listen about value.

Figure 3.2: Map of Key Concepts



3-3. EMPIRICAL METHODOLOGY

3-3.1 Overview and Justification

Along with the theoretical framework, this chapter must stake out an empirical methodology. The empirical methodology lies, as far as possible, in line with the ontology and epistemology that I have discussed already. In order to avoid totalising or unified narratives I have chosen to focus on two qualitative case studies, and though most of my empirical work revolves around the small-scale micro-physics of power, it is

often impossible to separate this level of discussion from the macro scale as Deleuze and Guattari pointed out. My fieldwork revolves around qualitative interviews with and observations of individuals from all of the alternative trading organisations under study, with the notable exception of the Zapatistas as I explain below. I supplement this with texts, websites, images etc that my case studies have produced about themselves and their views; with statistics produced by governments, IGOs and NGOs; and with secondary literature. My analysis is in some indeterminate way also influenced by some interviews I conducted with alternative trading organisations beyond my case studies.

Before deciding which two case studies to focus on I was in contact with ten trading organisations, conducting interviews with them via phone, Skype, email or in person:
Bishopston Trading (UK), in person
Café Libertad (Germany), via email
Ecologie Home (UK), in person
House of Fair Trade (Sweden), via Skype
Just Change (India), via Skype
Just Change (UK), via phone
Liberation Nuts (UK), in person
Pachacuti (UK), via email
Tatawelo (Italy), via Skype and email
Turqle (South Africa), via Skype
Value Added in Africa (Ireland), in person

After gaining some initial information from these interviews, I reflected on what makes these organisations different and similar and what aspects of my argument each would allow me to develop. These organisations are very different in their levels of political radicalism, chosen tactics, geographical locations, and levels of involvement with their suppliers. Café Libertad and Turqle stood out as the two most fruitful cases to compare for two main reasons. Firstly, Turqle relates to its suppliers through a language of *expertise/pragmatism* (we are experts and we can help you in the here and now), while Café Libertad relates to its suppliers through a language of *solidarity/politics* (we are the same as you; we are no experts but we will offer what support we can). These are two frequently occurring and contrasting approaches in the world of organisations who work for global justice, and they relate in very different ways to decolonial critiques of the development discourse. Secondly, and perhaps being a cause to the former, there is a contrast in the level of organisation in the supplier group. Turqle works with a collection of people who are not organised autonomously in any way and who do not exist as a group except in the eyes of Turqle themselves and this thesis. Café Libertad on the other hand import coffee from a highly organised and self-defined political group, which has

some renown in radical left movements across the world. Given my focus on the role of representation and voice in global trading relations, these two cases, with their contrasting approaches to their supplier groups, stood out as the most interesting and promising ones to compare.

My empirical data on the Café Libertad/Zapatistas relationship consists of interviews with and observation of members of Café Libertad (Hamburg), and the use of policy documents and PR materials/communiqués made by both Café Libertad and the Zapatistas. I have not visited the Zapatistas in Mexico or carried out interviews with Zapatista coffee farmers in any other way. There are multiple reasons for this. Firstly, the Zapatistas are already heavily researched in international academic and activist literature, which means there is a plethora of rich secondary literature on almost all political aspects of their activities. Though little of this research focuses on the Zapatistas' production and trade of coffee specifically (Martinez-Torres 2006 and Vergara-Camus 2014 being the notable exceptions), I have been able to answer my questions by triangulating this literature with research on Mexican coffee production produced by agriculture scholars. Secondly, the Zapatistas have faced an astonishing number of requests for research participation in the last 20 years and have responded to this research fatigue by taking control of their own knowledge production. They produce an impressive wealth of research about themselves in the form of blogs, films, communiques, speeches, essays, photos and more. With all of these existing resources, it became evident that the cost to myself/my university, the Zapatistas, and the environment, would be far disproportionate to the benefit I could gain by going there in person.

In the case of Turqle I conducted qualitative interviews and observation with both trader and supplier. I chose two supplier organisations and interviewed/observed a range of staff who work for them, in their workplaces in the Western Cape Region. I interviewed and observed all Turqle staff at their office in Cape Town. I also studied policy documents, websites and PR materials written by all three organisations.

My fieldwork covers the period between early 2012 and late 2013. Developments have taken place in the case study organisations since this period – staff have come and gone, contracts have been altered, etc – but since a PhD project must sometime come to an end I chose December 2013 as an empirical cutoff point.

My largely qualitative methods were selected because they enabled me to study the daily practices, beliefs and language of my case studies to some detail. Since I set out assuming a capillary interpretation of power, I could not gain the necessary information through

surveys or econometrics. Rather, I have been looking for expressions of power in specific interpersonal relations (for example between Pieter and Rain at Turqle and my anonymised workers at Bomvu; or between these workers and the senior manager of their company) and ways of conceptualising the self and others (for example the way these companies speak about and present themselves to other actors).

Critics might wonder why I have opted for an interview- and observation based methodology rather than some other model that better calls into question the hierarchies between the researcher and the researched. Participatory action research is a methodology growing in popularity and influence in fields that study global justice (e.g. Chatterton et al 2008). In participatory action research, the researcher works together with the participants from the outset, defining research questions together and collaborating to produce a research project that is of use to the participants. The aim is to reverse traditional hierarchies and academic exploitation of subjects: rather than an academic suddenly appearing and extracting knowledge from the participants and passing it off as her/his own in a written publication, the academic becomes a facilitator of learning and a provider of resources (Gibson-Graham 2006b). Why have I not opted for this method? The reasons are many. Since the very nature of my research project focuses to such a large extent on the construction of knowledge and science itself, as we saw above, my intervention is to a large extent an epistemic one. The critical reflection on the ways in which we need to rethink our conceptions of upgrade and development is not of short-term interest or practical use for any particular trading organisation in the here and now: attempting to divert more of my participants' time and resources for this end than they already have, is not a prospect that promises any less imposition or hierarchy than interview- and observation based study. Furthermore, it is not always the case that research and writing is only a privilege. The construction of knowledge that critically reassesses the foundations of Western thinking is a task that requires much work and specifically academic skills: pulling together strands from different literatures, collating knowledge of relevance to the research question in an accessible format, deciphering difficult texts. The final reasons are practical. As a PhD student with very limited funds and time, I have been unable to initiate any open-ended, free thinking or long term action research projects such as can be found in Gibson-Graham 2006b. The project had to result in a PhD dissertation written by myself. I have not been able to promise any resources, or even guaranteed publications, out of this work, so to pitch it as an action research project that could be of any real use to the participants has been unrealistic. This is not to say that this project is not politically involved or aims to serve political action, but it has meant that interviews and observation is the chosen core method.

3-3.2 A Critical Look at my Empirical Tools

My fieldwork method could be described as interview- and observation based. A potentially problematic feature of qualitative interviews and observation is that they are overtly dependent on the researching individual: the researcher takes their own notes and decides what to include and omit (Burnham et al 2004: 225-6; Bayard de Volo & Schatz 2004: 296). On the one hand this means researchers have to be careful to maintain their relative neutrality. On the other, the 'problem' of researcher-subjectivity might in fact be a strength: whilst quantitative or positivist research might give the false impression that the researcher is neutral and objective, qualitative interviewers are forced to acknowledge and be open about their biases (Denscombe 2003: 93).

When dealing with interviews it is important to remember that an interview is essentially the telling of a story by somebody about themselves and their view of the world. How people think about themselves might be different from how somebody else would interpret them or their experience from a different perspective. A more extreme version of this problematic can be that an interviewee may tell you a version of the story that benefits them in some way, whether they are conscious of it or not (Berry 2002: 680). Furthermore, when doing overt research, chances are the interviewees will know a bit about the purpose of the research, and they may even want to be of help to it. They may therefore be prone to give answers that they believe you want to hear or that would be convenient for you. In a text on interview techniques, Tim Rapley, in true poststructuralist spirit, stresses how interviews can *construct* answers that did not exist before (2004: 16). Since I am an academic researching people outside academia, it is not inconceivable that my interviewees simply had not thought about some of the issues I brought up in my interviews, at least in the way I phrased them. They might therefore have constructed answers that they believed I wanted to hear. Rapley, however, does not see this as a problem, provided the interview process is sufficiently accounted for in the research report (Ibid.). An interviewer can never be neutral, and information that was 'invented' during an interview is as valid as information that was invented elsewhere. Rather than smile and nod as many methodology experts would advise interviewers to do, Rapley suggests what he calls a 'co-operative work' model of interviewing (Ibid. p. 20). In this model the interviewer takes an active part and is open about their opinions and thoughts during an interview. Rapley argues that this is useful, not only because it is more honest than feigning neutrality, but because it can evoke more in-depth responses as interviewees may feel more relaxed than if they were being interrogated (Ibid. p. 25).

Another frequent criticism of qualitative interviews and observation, especially in case study research, is that there is a risk the researcher becomes personally involved and partial to the research participants' interests. There is a risk that friendships between

researcher and participants forged during fieldwork come to influence how the researcher interprets the situation afterwards. How easy is it to criticise people whom one has become friends with and has received helpful input from? This may be especially difficult when the researcher is politically aligned with the research participants and the political projects of which their organisations are a part. On the other hand, however, it is difficult to imagine any other method in which this would not be a risk, especially one that could offer the type of qualitative detail that interviews and observation do. Furthermore, the difficulty of criticising research participants towards whom the researcher feels personally friendly is in many ways a false worry. Feelings of friendliness are completely different from dependencies (e.g. funding, provision of future research access, etc – of which there are none in this project) and can easily be put to one side in the interest of critical analysis. Avoiding critique is only pleasant in the short term and does not serve the interest of subverting hierarchies in global trade on a larger scale.

Policy documents, communiqués, etc are the final category of data source I have used. Documents such as policies, websites, annual reports, leaflets, etc, cost nothing and offer useful information that I can process at leisure (Gidley 2004: 252). In contrast to the issue of interviews potentially constructing answers that did not 'exist' prior to the interview, documents produced by the participants are written and designed at their own initiative, which can tell us something about what types of issues are important to them. However, it also means the documents are biased. As a result, we need to distinguish between documents as *resources* and documents as *topics in themselves* (Scott 1990: 36). As resources they can tell us something about what their authoring organisation does and thinks, and they can give us facts and figures. But just as in interviews, we must also ask why the organisation has decided to say what it is saying; what image the organisation wants to give of itself and why.

3-3.3 Self-Reflexivity

I have already described some general risks and potential shortcomings of my empirical methods. What needs to be added, however, is some reflection on how my methodology will be limited by my own specific identity as a researcher. Having grown up in urban Northern Europe, being a 6'1" able-bodied white person, female but with a queer gender identity (i.e. always seeking gender confusion and, where possible, refusal), having been part of radical left social movements and activist groups for the last decade, I have attributes and skills that serve some purposes better than others. With my appearance and my social skills, I can blend in rather well in, say, an anarchist group meeting in Europe, or even a formal business meeting in Europe with some grooming. I blend in less well in a South African township or rural vegetable factory. Consequently, my access to

the white, European, anarchist, feminist activists of Café Libertad, has proven much easier and more in depth than my access to most of the workers at Turqle's supplier factories in rural Western Cape who, too rightly, seemed unable to relate to me as anything other than a stranger. My own identity as a white urban European is what has informed my choice to focus on the importer side of these trading relationships as much as possible, that is, Café Libertad and Turqle. (As we will see in chapter 5, I categorise Turqle as being in and of the global North despite being located in South Africa since Cape Town houses a North-within-the-South). My interest in this thesis is not to go to the global South and tell 'them' how to improve 'their' situation, but to take a hard look at urban European approaches to trade and see where they can improve. Inevitably, however, it is impossible to study trade relationships without (to at least some meaningful extent) studying both sides.

3-4. CONCLUSION

This chapter had two main parts. In the first part I outlined my theoretical framework, that is, the approaches and ideas I use in this thesis in order to make sense of my research. Here I presented the capillary view of power as expressed principally by Foucault. Whilst power is decentralised and complex, however, there are certain patterns of hierarchy that are useful to identify and generalise about. I stylised three such patterns of hierarchy as colonialism/Eurocentrism, capitalism/capitalocentrism, and patriarchy/androcentrism. Together they interact in what I have called – following Mignolo, Quijano and others – the colonial matrix of power. My argument has been that inequalities in global value chains must be interpreted through this colonial matrix rather than through a monologic of capitalism.

In order to draw out the political nature of economics, and the entanglement of neoclassic economics in all three hierarchical patterns, I focused on the notion of value. Value is a concept that philosophers and economists have used to discuss and measure the benefit, importance and fairness of human relations. Marx famously used the concept to draw attention to the exploitative nature of capitalist production, but it should also be understood as a concept that highlights the political nature of economics. GVC analysis has lacked critical discussion around the notion of value, and has instead adopted neoclassical interpretations of it. Once we interpret value as something political, furthermore, we must pay attention to who is able to speak and listen in the value chain.

After outlining my interpretation of power and domination in political economy, I turned towards the end of the first part of this chapter to the scope for resisting and subverting

it. Since power is decentralised, my research looks for challenges to it that are prefigurative and that attempt to disentangle the colonial matrix through alternative practices and relations. Epistemic disentanglement from the colonial matrix might mean to replace a monologic with a pluriversal logic of difference. Disentanglement from capitalism might mean operating a business that is not privately owned, is non-profit and does not compete with other firms. As J. K. Gibson-Graham and others show, we already engage in many productive and reproductive activities that fall outside of the description of capitalism. Disentanglement from patriarchy might involve moving beyond gender hierarchies, gender roles and gendered divisions of labour. As Kimmel and others argue, gender is already only one part of our identities and behaviour, so to act outside of gender roles is not only thinkable but commonplace. Finally, disentanglement from colonialism might involve moving beyond the assumptions that all societies should or will become like the West. As Mignolo and countless other scholars show, an unimaginable plethora of societies and mindsets have existed, and do exist, that do not place Western modernity as the apex of human development.

The second part of the chapter outlined my empirical methodology. Given the capillary interpretation of power, this thesis uses mainly qualitative methods since those are better able to capture the level of detail necessary for understanding micropolitics. Since it is difficult to distinguish between micro- and macropolitics, however, some of my interview questions and policy document readings border the quantitative. My own position as a white European lefty has led to an empirical focus on Turqle and Café Libertad, i.e. what I interpret as the Northern actors in these trading relationships.

My two central case studies, Turqle and their suppliers on the one hand and Café Libertad and the Zapatistas on the other, have very different approaches to value and upgrade. Turqle focuses on implementing some of the key insights from GVC analysis into practice, helping their producers capture more value-added and achieve long term economic empowerment through training and education. Café Libertad, on the other hand, focuses on supporting the Zapatistas in their political struggle and expression. That the Zapatistas still export green (unroasted) coffee, and therefore sit hopelessly at the most upstream end of the value chain, is not perceived as the central concern.

As we will see in the following chapters, discussing real-life examples of prefigurative struggles of disentanglement, we must grapple with questions that Mignolo's theoretical discussion is spared. Mignolo stresses the importance of epistemic delinking and radical breaks, which makes for an excellent theoretical guideline. When we start to look into specific examples of political struggle, however, as we will see in the following chapters, disentangling from the colonial matrix does not by necessity happen radically or at once.

When faced with challenges in which the stakes are high – hunger, illiteracy, abuse, drug abuse, disenfranchisement – it can sometimes appear (and perhaps even be) necessary to fight political struggles along totalising lines: to be successful at capitalist accumulation, to win concessions from the state, to engineer value chains so that more 'value-added' lands in the South. The challenge in the below chapters is to gain some clarity into what particular mix of radical and compromised action can constitute a disentanglement from the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist matrix of power rather than a new and more complicated entanglement.

Chapter 4

Café Libertad/Zapatistas

4-1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses our first case study: the trade of coffee between Zapatista coffee growers in Mexico and the importing collective Café Libertad in Germany. The overarching question in this thesis is: in what ways does this case constitute a disentanglement of the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist matrix of power? After a brief introduction to the case, I start answering this question by outlining some of the ways in which these actors attempt to disentangle the colonial matrix together. By organising through flat and participatory-democratic structures, and by sharing resources collectively, Café Libertad and the Zapatistas (with some exceptions) create radically different ways of being. Through rejecting patriarchal gender norms and divisions of labour, Café Libertad and the Zapatistas (the latter at least to some extent) disassemble the hierarchies, assumptions and behavioural rules of patriarchy. Through denouncing Eurocentric visions of what a 'developed' society looks like, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad (though here Café Libertad has its limits) move beyond a Western monologic of the notion of the good life and the colonial hierarchy of civilisations. By pulling at the knots and loops of the matrix; by loosening stitches and tying new connections, alternative daily practices and institutions change its overall nature and makeup. To the extent that these alternative practices and institutions affect other people – by being spoken about by others, by influencing others, by drawing in others as participants (for example by selling coffee to them) – they create change that matters in wider society.

At the same time, relating to existing society means being in constant negotiation and compromise. In section 4-3. I reflect on the entanglements of the colonial matrix that the prefigurative trading of these actors have not managed to disentangle, or in some cases that it is not directly seeking to disentangle. For example, broader inequalities between the global North and South and most government behaviour lie outside of the remit of prefigurative strategies. Furthermore, lacking communication and dispute settlement infrastructures hamper the relationship, especially when it comes to struggles over value and voice. As we will see, both organisations exist and must survive within a globalised economic context in which one must earn enough money to stay afloat and compete against others to sell one's produce. This does not mean that they are inescapably trapped inside capitalism, but it means that some aspects of capitalist economy – most notably market competition, but also to some extent profit – are too difficult to escape: withdrawing from 'the market' would require all but withdrawing from German and

Mexican society altogether. As existing literature emphasises, prefigurative politics exists in a space between the unwanted mainstream, which prefigurativists must actively 'oppose', and the desired alternative, towards which they must actively 'propose' (Cornell 2011; Day 2005). We will see in this chapter that the Zapatistas and Café Libertad are shaped and limited by the colonial matrix that they exist within. Through their practices and organisational structures they manage to disentangle many aspects of the matrix, but they are also still entangled in complex ways.

Alongside the tensions between entanglement and disentanglement, the question that concerns us here is the question of value. What type of value is the Zapatista/Café Libertad relation attempting to upgrade? As we saw in the previous chapter, value should be understood as a question of the justice of productive activity over which people struggle to have influence. Within the Zapatistas and Café Libertad people are also struggling over this question. Since these organisations are (at least formally) democratic we have some idea of what many of their members are struggling for, though there is no single statement or policy document on the matter that we can assume fully represents all members' views. We can generalise, however, and summarise some of the Zapatistas' main aims: a dignified life for all, including for indigenous and oppressed populations; equal distribution of resources, land and education for all ethnic groups, as well as all individuals within them (though this latter issue is somewhat disputed within the Zapatista membership since a minority believe that patriarchal gender norms should be protected); equal voice in political decision-making (EZLN 2002a,b,c). In their trading activities the Zapatistas aim for mutual aid, egalitarian sharing of resources, and solidarity (see e.g. Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 2003). Café Libertad state in an information leaflet as well as in member interviews that they perceive themselves as an anarcho-syndicalist organisation that seeks to build bonds of solidarity and to work for liberation from any type of oppression (Café Libertad 2015). They want to carry out 'exchange on equal terms, with all its contradictions and difficulties' (Ibid.). Here too, then, there is a clear commitment to egalitarianism, mutual aid, and pluriversalism.

These crude summaries give a broad indication as to what the Zapatistas and Café Libertad value. An even better indication, I argue, is to look at the organisational structures and practices of these two actors. Interpreting the Zapatistas and Café Libertad as prefigurative organisations, we can see their value-aims as immanent in many of their activities and organisational forms. As I outline in the section on disentanglements, both organisations organise through participatory democracy, promote the coexistence of different living styles, share resources according to egalitarian principles, and work against discrimination and oppression (for the most part). At the same time, conversations about value, i.e. about the justice and purpose of

production, are almost non-existent between (rather than within) these two actors. While Café Libertad attempt to discuss value in meetings and emails, the Zapatistas are not forthcoming – perhaps a form of what Hirschman calls 'exit' (1970), or what Scott calls 'Weapons of the Weak' (1985)? In this case study, then, upgrade is partly about providing the Zapatistas with more money for the coffee they produce, but also about improving the abilities of all involved actors within as well as between each organisation to speak and listen about values.

4-1.1 Introduction to Café Libertad and the Zapatistas

The Zapatistas is one of the most well-known radical autonomous political groups in the world. It is a group of mainly indigenous people in rural Chiapas, South-Eastern Mexico, organised through a system of civil government and welfare service provision, as well as a military guerilla known as the EZLN. After a short initial battle in and around major cities in the region of Chiapas in 1994, the EZLN withdrew to surrounding rural areas, where a movement of currently 250,000 people (according to the EZLN, see Sabio and Castellanos 2014) live and organise as autonomously from the national government as possible. The Zapatistas organise through their own alternative government, based on participatory democracy and egalitarianism (Chatterton 2007) and run their own social services such as education and health care. One of the few sources of sustainable foreign income – that is, income not from charitable or solidarity donations from supporters across the world – comes from coffee export, as the region of Chiapas has a long coffee growing history ever since the Spanish brought the plant over from Africa in the 1790s (Martinez-Torres 2006: 10).

Café Libertad is a small workers' collective in Hamburg, Germany, that became Europe's first importer of Zapatista coffee in 1999. At the time of my field work Café Libertad had 7 staff members, most of whom were working part-time. Café Libertad was founded as a solidarity trade organisation to support the Zapatistas' struggle through buying their coffee, roasting it and selling it on to consumers in Europe, and also by spreading knowledge and information about the Zapatistas in Europe. Today Café Libertad works also with several other products made by other producers elsewhere, as well as some other products produced by the Zapatistas, but Zapatista coffee is still its main trade (Café Libertad 2015).

Café Libertad buys green coffee from the Zapatistas, which is roasted and packaged in Hamburg. In that sense the division of labour still follows a traditional colonial pattern: the raw materials are produced in the South and are value-added in the North. The Zapatistas grow, harvest and pre-process the beans, i.e. pulp them, wash them, dry and

pack them, etc. Café Libertad's role is to buy the green coffee, subcontract the roasting and packaging, and sell the consumable coffee on to retailers, cafés, private consumers and anarchist social centres in Northern Europe, as well as to provide information, political lobbying and other support to the Zapatistas' struggle (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Café Libertad 2011). In the chain of tasks from coffee seed to finished brew there are several other actors that I do not focus on here: external transport and shipping companies are employed on a traditional market basis; conventional insurance companies are used; sacks for the coffee beans, printing and packaging, and even roasting, are purchased or sub-contracted on the free market (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). This is done out of practical necessity, in the lack of politically sympathetic anticapitalist transporting businesses, roasting companies, insurers etc where they are needed (Ibid.).

Café Libertad also imports other products from the Zapatistas such as leather boots, calendars and books, as well as coffee from elsewhere (from a women's co-operative in Honduras and another co-operative in Costa Rica), some teas and other cupboard food items from around the world, and more generally anarchist and marxist literature, t-shirts, badges, etc (Café Libertad 2015). The Zapatista coffee is what earns the biggest income and provides some level of financial security for the company (Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Aside from importing and selling these items, Café Libertad runs frequent information events in Hamburg and elsewhere in Europe: film screenings, talks, stalls, etc – happening several times per month (Ibid.).

At the time of my fieldwork, Café Libertad imported coffee from all three coffee co-operatives in the Zapatista-governed regions:

- Yachil Xojobal Chulchan, based in Pantelhó, North-East of the regional capital St Cristobal. Has approximately 685 member farms (Tango Italia 2015).
- Yochin Tayal Kinal in Altamirano, East of St Cristobal. Has over 1,500 member farms (Sherman 2012).
- Ssit Lequil Lum, also in Altamirano, with around 500 member farms (Tatawelo Italy 2015) [1].

[1] As of October 2014 Ssit Lequil Lum is officially closed by the Mexican national government due to its refusal to pay taxes.

Figure 4.1: St Cristobal, Regional Capital of Chiapas

Figure 4.2: The Co-Operatives in Relation to St Cristobal

4-2. DISENTANGLEMENTS

Reading these cases as prefigurative, our focus lies not on the demands that the Zapatistas and Café Libertad make of governments and the rest of society to change (though both actors certainly make such demands), but on the 'politics of the act'; the alternative institutions and relations they are building. The Zapatistas and Café Libertad use their organisational tools and their pricing mechanisms to prefigure a trading relationship that at least partly disentangles the colonial matrix of power. Café Libertad and the Zapatistas have organised their trading differently from mainstream coffee trade in several respects. As I will detail below, the share of the price that goes to the coffee growers is higher than in conventional markets, the price is more stable, and the trading relationship is committed. Ownership structures are for the most part collective rather than private and everybody (or almost everybody) is encouraged to make their voices heard in decision-making. Instead of taking the universalist image of 'development' as a

given, these actors call it into question and celebrate different ways of living. As we will see, there are several caveats to these broad statements, but the policies and behaviour of these actors do constitute a challenge to prevailing hierarchies.

What is clear is that the 'value' this case study focuses on is different from capitalist value and broader than value-added. The main aim is not to upgrade the Zapatistas' ability to export a more functionally value-added product, such as roasted and packaged coffee. Café Libertad members deem this too costly, and they believe it would be too difficult to achieve the correct quality of roasting if the Zapatistas roasted the coffee themselves (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012). As Stephan, a member of Café Libertad stated:

> The problem is, if they roast their own coffee and they bring the roasted coffee to Germany, which would be the greatest thing, we don't… we have to sell the coffee *here* – do they roast it the way we are used to drinking coffee in Germany? What happens if maybe the package has a hole or a cut and the coffee gets oxygen, […] [then] we cannot sell it, that's the problem. I know from one project from Cuba, they roast the coffee by themselves and it always tasted a little bleh. [When we roast the coffee here in Hamburg] we can guarantee the taste [and the freshness], if we roast it in Chiapas, by the time we get the coffee over to Europe we've lost more or less three months […] meaning we would have to do smaller [and more frequent shipments], so the coffee would become very very expensive. And we always have to compete with other people who sell coffee. (Ibid.)

Very similar reasons were stated by a member of staff of the Italian equivalent of Café Libertad, Tatawelo (Claudio C. in interview 9 July 2013).

Separately from their relationship with Café Libertad, the now legally threatened coffee co-operative Ssit Lequil Lum is involved in a project in conjunction with a collection of local NGOs and the just-mentioned Tatawelo to build a small factory and office building in which Ssit Lequil Lum would be able to process, roast, grind, package, label and sell coffee on the local market, as well as do their administrative work. This project would focus on using the *'desmanche'* coffee that cannot be exported, i.e. beans that are rated as lower-class because they are the wrong size or shape, making it difficult to achieve an even roast (Claudio C. in interview 9 July 2013; Tatawelo Italy 2015). One of the other three coffee co-operatives, Yochin Tayel K'inal, already has small scale ability to process, roast, grind and package *desmanche* coffee to be sold in locations around Chiapas (Claudio C. in interview 9 July 2013; Alive in Mexico 2012). Neither of these projects, however, are looking to sell their produce outside of Mexico for the above reasons.

Neither is the aim to increase the amount of profit in this chain. As we will see, most interactions and relations between these two actors are markedly different from conventional business relations. For the most part, there is no distinction between a firm's owner and its workers, except where wage labourers are used on Zapatista farms. None of the actors receive a profit since there are de facto caps on everybody's incomes, except the subcontracted companies that supply the shipping, roasting, packing. The Zapatistas and Café Libertad seek to co-operate with each other and with other firms rather than to compete. People of all genders, with some significant exceptions in Chiapas, are paid the same wage, are able to do the same jobs, and are equally encouraged to make their voices heard in political decision-making. There is not an assumption from either party that the Zapatistas are at the receiving end of a 'development project' or that the Zapatistas are on a path to becoming more like modern Europe, though there are certain other mismatching assumptions and miscommunications regarding correct business behaviour.

What a GVC analyst might appreciate about this case study is that the price is more evenly distributed across the chain so that a much larger percentage share than is usual goes to the coffee producers. The accumulation of money is a key part of this trade: both the Zapatistas and Café Libertad must survive in a world where money is necessary to buy essential goods. Both actors are thus dependent on earning enough money. Since the Zapatistas are especially poor, making more money for them is a particular priority for both actors. Though both parties need to earn enough money, however, I would argue that this trading relationship is not in any deeper sense integrated into global coffee markets since its transactions happen between individual firms that are committed to each other, and their coffee price is only to a very minimal extent determined by prices on conventional market auctions. Nevertheless, earning enough currency to pay for wages, machines and subcontractors is a necessity. What a GVC analyst might see as missing in this case study is any type of economic upgrade with greater scope for continued advancement, such as functional upgrade (e.g. roasting and packaging coffee in Chiapas) or process upgrade (e.g. increased mechanisation of Zapatista coffee production) (Daviron and Ponte 2005). As we have seen, Café Libertad members deem the practical and economic obstacles to such upgrade to be prohibitive.

Instead Café Libertad has focused on paying a higher price for the green coffee (as well as non-economic forms of upgrade as we will see below and in chapter 6). To conceptualise the distribution of money in this trading relationship we can make use of the GVC framework, which was developed for this purpose. The first steps in mapping a value chain in GVC analysis is to map the input-output structure of the chain, i.e. to list who does what in the production process and who gets how much money of the final

price; and to pay attention to the territoriality, i.e. the geographical location of these different stages (Gereffi 1994: 96-97).

The coffee in this case is grown by farmers dispersed in various locations in Chiapas, but who are all politically and organisationally linked to the Zapatistas. These producers work on small family-owned farms, planting, nursing, growing, harvesting, hulling, and drying the coffee cherries (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Martinez-Torres 2006; Vergara-Camus 2014). They select the highest quality coffee beans, weigh them and pack them into large sacks, which are then sent by the container-load to Hamburg by ship, usually once a year. Café Libertad receives the coffee beans in Hamburg and drives them to its warehouse where they are stored for up to a year (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012). The beans are sent to a local roasting house in batches throughout the year since the shelf-life of a roasted bean is limited to a few months. The roasting house roasts, grinds if applicable, and packages the coffee into airtight bags, with added labels that Café Libertad has designed (Ibid.). The coffee is then returned to Café Libertad, who store it and dispatch to customers when they receive orders. For a more detailed schematic of the division of labour see Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Input-Output Structure and Territoriality of Zapatista – Café Libertad Coffee Chain

Actor	Task in chronological order (roughly)	Location
Zapatista farmers and co-operatives	Planting Sprouting Nursing Re-planting Weeding, fertilising, pruning Harvesting Hulling Drying Sorting Weighing Packing Storage Transport to Vera Cruz harbour Organic certification costs Insurance	Chiapas
Independent transport company	Shipping	Atlantic ocean
Café Libertad	Transport from harbour to warehouse Storage Transport to roaster	Hamburg
Independent roaster	Roasting Grinding (where applicable) Packaging	Hamburg
Café Libertad	Transport from roaster to warehouse Storage Retail Dispatch Marketing Label/packaging design Product development Overseeing shipping and other processes Insurance Customer services Political lobbying	Hamburg/ Europe

Note that this schematic does not include self-sustaining or 'core' business tasks such as internal company admin, human resources, accounting, premises maintenance, corporate fees, etc, but merely tasks that are externally visible in the value chain.

(Source: Compiled from interview data: Stephan 8 Nov 2012, Gerrit 9 Nov 2012, Folkert 11 Nov 2012)

To track where the money goes, a schematic of the breakdown of the price of a kilo of Zapatista coffee bought from Café Libertad is in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Price Breakdown of Zapatista Coffee Sold by Café Libertad

Price breakdown per kg of coffee in euros, 2011 (Based on 100 tonnes)		
Price paid to Zapatista co-operatives	4.75	i.e. 80 Mexican Pesos
Transport Mexico – Hamburg; storage	0.13	
Total price of raw coffee beans	**4.88**	
Roasting, grinding, packaging	0.85	
Allowing for a roasting loss of 17% of the price of green beans [because roasted beans are 17% lighter than green beans per kg]	0.83	
German government excise tax on coffee	2.19	
Total price of roasted coffee	**8.75**	
Café Libertad mark-up 50%	4.38	
Zapatista support fund (voluntarily added by Café Libertad)	0.45	
Net sale price per kg	**13.58**	
2% Discount	0.27	
7% VAT	0.97	
Sale price per kg	**14.82**	
Retail price per 500g roasted coffee packet	**7.41**	

(Source: Translated and adapted from Café Libertad 2011)

In 2011, for every kilo of roasted and packaged coffee that Café Libertad sold at €13.58 before VAT, €5.56 went to the Zapatista coffee co-operatives (this is the price the Zapatistas receive for the equivalent of a kilo of roasted coffee since one roasted kilo

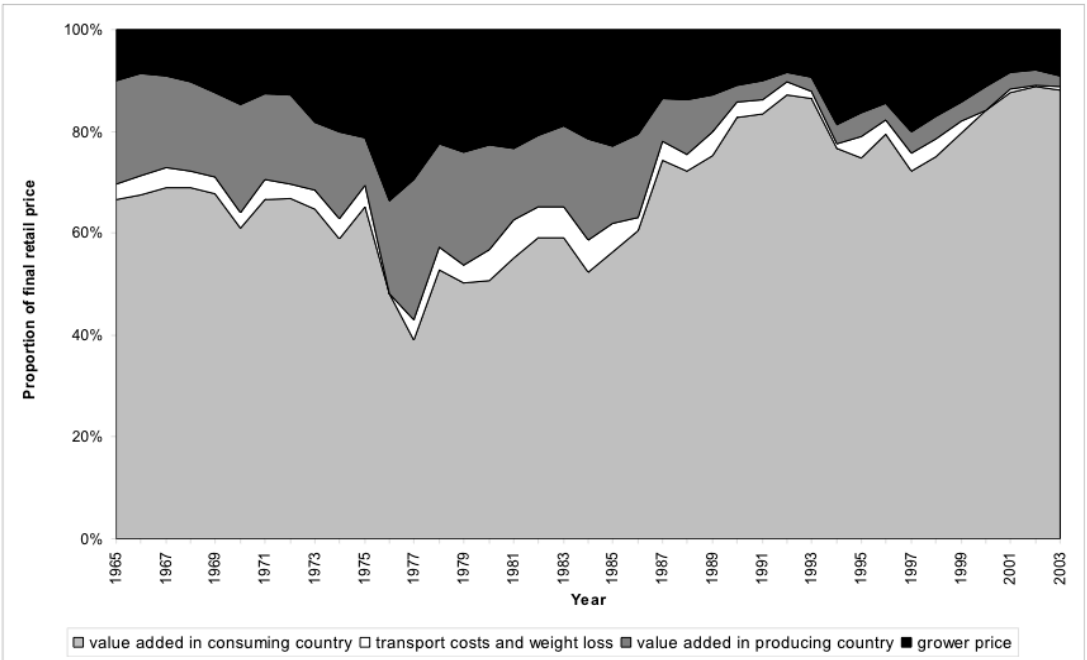
requires 1.17 kilos of green beans,) plus a support fund of €0.45 – that is 44% in total – and €4.38, i.e. 32% went to Café Libertad, with the rest (24%) going to transport companies, roasting/packaging companies and, above all, government taxes (Café Libertad 2011).

This division of the price across the two actors should be seen in the context of mainstream coffee trade. In mainstream coffee chains the producer of green coffee receives somewhere around 5-10% of the retail price, though if market prices skyrocket this percentage may temporarily rise to 20% or even higher in extreme scenarios (Kaplinsky 2004: 13; Daviron and Ponte 2005: 208). In the mainstream market, prices for green coffee are quite volatile with occasional hikes in the price, but overall very low. Indeed, many studies show how coffee farmers across the global South have been driven into poverty because of low prices, with many producers being forced to sell their beans at a loss for extended periods, and many being forced to give up coffee farming altogether (Ibid.; Oxfam 2002; Ponte 2002). Comparing this mainstream situation with the Café Libertad example, the latter sees a much more stable and generous price for green coffee. In 2011 Zapatista co-operatives were paid around the same price as the hiked-up mainstream market price at the time (4.75 euros, approximately 6.65 USD per kg), but 2010 and 2009 Café Libertad's price was around 130-135% of the mainstream market price: 3.21 euros (~4.33 USD) per kg in 2010 when the mainstream market average was around 3.30 USD per kg, and 2.80 euros (~3.78 USD) in 2009 when the market average was 2.86 USD (Café Libertad 2009, 2010, 2011; World Bank quoted in Index Mundi 2014). Note that all of these prices are for hulled, dried, sorted and packaged green beans, so farmers who do not have those pre-processing abilities will receive an even lower price for their completely unprocessed coffee. In the case of the Zapatistas, the coffee co-operatives provide for these abilities. On top of the price for the green coffee, Café Libertad has chosen to pay a premium of 45 euro-cents per roasted kilo (i.e. €0.37 per green kilo) into a Zapatista support fund, which is donated to the Zapatistas for community development or upgrading projects as they themselves see fit. Though this is a small fee per kilo, Café Libertad have donated many thousands of euros through this fund over the years, with no conditions or requirements on how the money should be spent.

We can thus note that the price paid by Café Libertad is both more stable and more generous than mainstream market prices. Aside from the absolute price there are questions about the relative division of money in the value chain. Learning from GVC analysis and dependency theory, global divisions in trade reveal themselves when we look at the relative value capture in a chain. Kaplinsky's 2004 report on the world market in coffee and cocoa provides useful data on how the value-added is distributed

between coffee growers and processors in mainstream coffee chains. He updates data from a study by Talbot in the 1990s and provides the table I have copied in Figure 4.5.

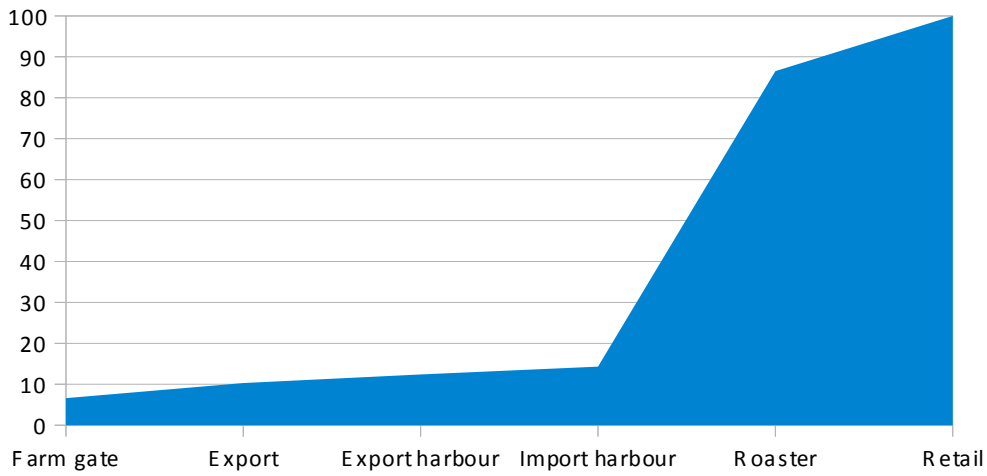
Figure 4.5: Kaplinsky's graph 'Inter-country distribution of income: % share of final retail price of coffee'



(Source: Kaplinsky 2004: 13)

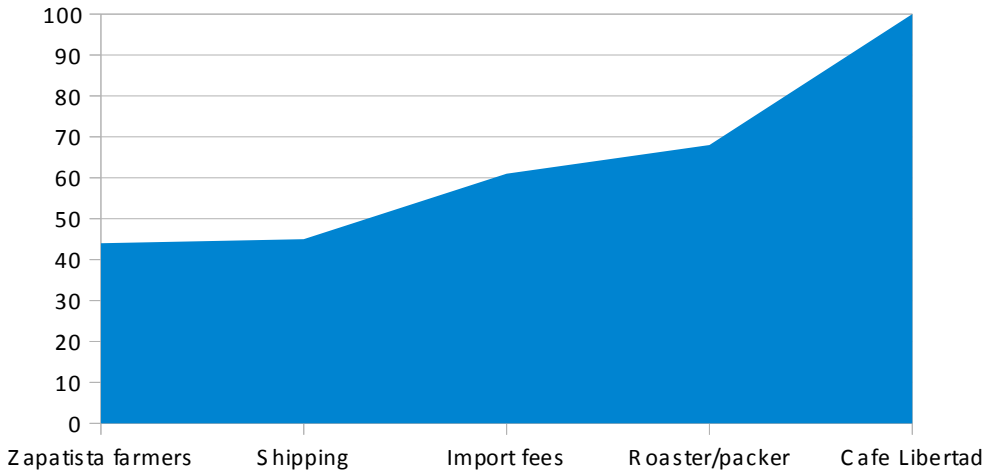
Here we can see that only a fraction of the price paid by the customer makes its way back to coffee farmers – the vast majority of financial value is captured by roasters and retailers in the consuming country (usually the global North). For a more specific example we can look at a case studied by Daviron and Ponte (2005). They show the price breakdown of coffee imported to Italy from Uganda (p. 208). See Figure 4.6 for a reproduction of their chart showing the proportions of retail price at various nodes. Their example is slightly older than our equivalent data for Café Libertad, looking at prices from 2001/2 rather than 2011. Furthermore, their example shows a different type of coffee (the cheaper Robusta type rather than the more expensive Arabica type that the Zapatistas grow) that is traded between different countries (Uganda to Italy rather than Mexico to Germany). These differences, however, are not great enough to make comparison futile. I have created an equivalent breakdown of the Zapatista-Café Libertad value chain in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.6: Daviron and Ponte's Chart of Uganda-Italy Robusta Retail Price Breakdown (Excl VAT)



(Source: Daviron and Ponte 2005: 208)

Figure 4.7: Zapatista-Café Libertad Retail Price Breakdown 2011 (Excl VAT)



The distribution of money in the Zapatistas-Café Libertad value chain is thus considerably more even than the conventional examples. Whereas Daviron and Ponte's Ugandan coffee farmers received only 6.6% of the total price, and Kaplinsky's aggregated Southern producers typically received somewhere between 10-20%, the Zapatistas received 44% in 2011, around 38% in 2010 and 34.5% in 2009, all including the €0.45 support fund premium.

Due to varying purchasing power parity and fluctuating currency exchange rates,

however, it is not enough to know which share of the price goes to whom, as the equivalent of a dollar spent in Hamburg might not buy as much as the equivalent of a dollar spent in Chiapas. Let us take this difficulty into account. Looking at a few purchasing power indices, Mexico comes out as somewhere between 35 and 50% cheaper than Germany (Numbeo 2014; Expatistan 2014). These figures are rather unreliable but may still provide a very loose indication of currency equivalences. In 2009/10, Café Libertad paid around 2.10 euro per kg of green coffee to the individual Zapatista farmers. This is the price the farmers kept for themselves – Café Libertad then paid an additional 90 euro-cent per kg to the farmers' co-operatives, which take care of transport to the harbour, sorting, bagging, insurance, organic certification, and more (Café Libertad 2011). For the work they were able to perform themselves, Zapatista farmers thus received 2.10 euros, or 35 Mexican pesos per kg.

To see how this relates to their overall income we can use data from a study of coffee farming in Chiapas by Maria Elena Martinez-Torres (2006). This study shows that average holdings of farmers in the West Highlands of Chiapas (the area of the study that is closest to the regions that Café Libertad import from) are around 2 hectares per farm (Ibid. p. 89). The organic coffee that is grown there yields around 449.46 kg per hectare per year, i.e. around a tonne per farm per year (Ibid. p. 113). This would represent an income of 2,100 euro per farm in 2009/10 if sold to Café Libertad. Most small-hold coffee farmers in Chiapas do not exclusively farm coffee, however: Martinez-Torres shows that coffee usually makes up about 40-60% of the farm's land use, with food crops, livestock and forest being grown as well (Ibid. p. 90). Granted, all of this data is highly generalised and abstracted, but in very rough terms, around half of the income of a farm in the West Highlands of Chiapas in 2009 would – if its coffee was sold to Café Libertad – amount to 2,100 euros. If Mexico is half as expensive to live in as Germany, this would be equivalent to 4,200 euros per year in Hamburg, per farm. Even if these figures are very approximate and wide of the mark, we can still deduce with some certainty that the Zapatista farmers are not becoming wealthy from their coffee farming. Even the higher-than-market price Café Libertad is paying is quite meagre.

Nevertheless, the price and overall price share that the Zapatistas receive is markedly higher than in conventional markets. In some respects this monetary upgrade is similar to what GVC analysts understand as upgrade resulting from ethical certifications such as Fairtrade (Kaplinsky 2010): the producer company manages to demand more money for its product as a result of conforming to an ethical certification, or in the Zapatistas' case a political reputation, which allows their product to be sold at a premium price. What is highly unconventional in this value chain, however, is that Café Libertad is voluntarily giving up some of the income it would have enjoyed as a conventional for-profit trader,

and its staff are choosing to work for a lower wage and for no profit, and instead paying the Zapatistas a higher price. Since Café Libertad pay equally high prices to other (non-Zapatista) producers whose coffee they trade, none of which have any sort of reputation in Europe, it is clear that the commitment to paying a high price relates to any sort of political actor with whom they feel a solidarity connection, rather than a brand name or reputation.

Apart from distribution of money, another way in which Café Libertad and the Zapatistas are attempting to prefigure a disentanglement of the matrix of power is through their organisational structures. I argue that both Café Libertad and the Zapatistas are overwhelmingly non-capitalist organisations since they are (for the most part) non-profit, worker-owned and collaborative rather than competitive. Added to this, both organisations (to varying degrees) avoid reproducing patriarchal gender roles and the colonial hierarchy of civilisations.

Zapatista coffee production is governed through three overlapping organisational units: the coffee is grown on *farms* that are owned and worked by families; these farms exist within a *civil governance system* that is participatory-democratic; and the coffee is sold through *coffee co-operatives* that are run by representatives of the member farms (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Aroma Zapatista 2014).

The individual farm could be seen as the end-destination of the money Café Libertad pays for the coffee. The money that is paid for the coffee goes through the co-operatives and is distributed among co-operative member farms from there, though some of it stays in the co-operative to pay for collectively used facilities, tools, services, etc. Any surplus beyond the farms' basic needs must be passed on to the Juntas de Buen Gobierno to finance public Zapatista hospitals, schools, and so on (Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 2003). These coffee exports are thus not intended to make any individual rich in relation to the broader collective, but in as much as possible incomes should be shared.

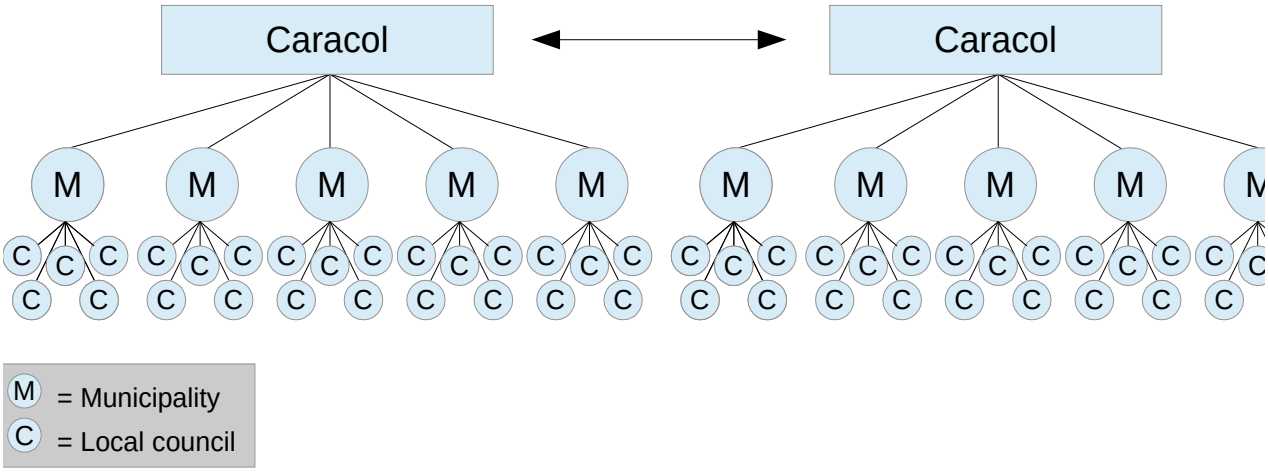
Becoming wealthy is not something Café Libertad workers are doing either – they earn what most of their workers would describe as a sufficient but not a particularly high wage of 18 euros per hour (as of March 2014, AGHA 2014), with a policy limiting work to six hours per day. Café Libertad is a non-profit company and avoids amassing a surplus at all, beyond a small buffer fund; necessary reinvestments into the business (such as occasionally buying new computers or acquiring new technology); and collecting money for political causes they believe in (e.g. for donations to Zapatista communities, Zapatista solidarity organisations in Europe, or to other anarchist groups in Germany that

campaign on non-Zapatista issues).

The farms grow and sun dry the coffee cherries (as well as many other crops, most of which are for subsistence rather than cash) and sell the coffee on to, or via, a coffee co-operative. These co-ops were founded to enable farmers to club together and share certain pre-processing capabilities such as hulling, transport, packaging, admin work, and more, which are usually beyond the capabilities of individual farms. The co-operatives consist of several hundred members – from around 350 member farms in the case of Ssit Lequil Lum to up to a thousand in the case of Yochin Tayal Kinal – and are run by boards of representatives elected from the member farms. The boards consist of a few individuals, between about five and twenty depending on the number of member farms, and are usually elected for three years at a time (Treter 2007; Aroma Zapatista 2014). As with all Zapatista governance positions, these representatives are rotational, with different members of the community being encouraged to run for election.

The farms and the co-ops they govern sit within the broader civil governance structure known as the Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Good Government Councils), a set of regional councils where representatives elected from the general population meet and make decisions. These councils are the governing body for all social and economic policy areas of the Zapatistas and are not specifically related to coffee, but since coffee is such an important income for Zapatista communities the Juntas often have a say in coffee-related decisions as well. The Juntas system consists of five regional councils made up of representatives from smaller municipalities, with each *Caracol* covering around five municipalities each. These municipal councils in turn are attended by representatives who have been elected by open ballot in smaller community assemblies. There are over 1,100 Zapatista communities in Chiapas and everybody who is old enough (in some communities over 15 years of age, in others over 12) and who are able to, are expected to attend the community assembly meetings (Chatterton 2007; Starr et al 2011). Representatives who are elected do not receive any wages or payments for carrying out their representative duties, so in order to ensure that not only better off people are able to act as representatives, the roles are rotated very regularly and are usually part-time, and community members who are not currently serving as representatives are also expected to pitch in and help the representatives' families with food donations, farm work and so on (Ibid.).

Figure 4.8: Levels of Delegation in Zapatista Civil Governance Structure (JBG)



Formally speaking, it is clear that the Zapatistas' governance structures are very democratic. However, one significant limitation is the informal gender inequalities that exist within these communities. The EZLN and Junta representatives have taken measures to disentangle existing gendered divisions of labour and extreme forms of gender norms. For the EZLN leadership at least, gender equality has been one of the Zapatistas' aims from the start. Along with its first declaration during the 1994 uprising, the EZLN published a list of ten bullet points, called the Women's Revolutionary Law, stating ways in which women should be equal to men. To some, this declaration put women's rights at the forefront of the Zapatistas' struggles, making the EZLN one of the world's very few guerilla groups to list gender equality as one of their central aims (Millán 1998). Women are able to rise to positions of leadership in the EZLN, for example it was a woman, Mayora Ana María, who commanded the section of the guerilla that occupied St Christóbal in the January 1994 uprising, and another woman, Subcomandanta Ramona, who led the peace dialogues shortly afterwards (Millán 1998: 73; Marcos 2014). For others, the Women's Revolutionary Law was a contentious document, attracting disgruntled mumbles and objections from many men in the organisation (Millán 1998: 75-76).

When it comes to civilian political representation, men dominated the municipal councils and Caracoles at their inception in 2003, but women have gradually begun to take a greater share of seats (Zapatistas 2013). The inclusion of women in councils has progressed slowly in places, and there is still a predominance of younger women since married women and mothers are often unable to leave their family duties, or not permitted by their husbands to leave their usual work to serve in political roles (Leticia writing for JBG Caracol II in Zapatistas 2013: 19). Some councils have now achieved equal representation for women whilst others are lagging behind (Zapatistas 2013).

In 1998 Márgara Millán wrote that approximately 30 percent of members of the EZLN guerilla are women (1998: 65) – a slightly newer figure indicates up to 40 percent (Kellogg 2005: 122). To find the most up to date information we turn to a book of reports from the different Caracoles on the progress of women's rights within the Zapatista movement since 1994, presented at a gathering (conference/festival) in Chiapas in late 2013 (Walker 2014, Zapatistas 2013). Here the Caracoles report on women's rights to 'occupy positions of authority in the organization and earn military rank in the revolutionary armed forces', as the Women's Revolutionary Law put it in 1994:

> From *Caracol* IV, Morelia: "There are *compañeras* who have understood the work well, although there have been obstacles that we encounter as we go about our work. But we have come out to spread our efforts…"
> From *Caracol* V, Roberto Barrios: "[…] We have *compañeras* as regional authorities, and some also participate as *milicianas*, so this [i.e. women's equal right to participation in the EZLN armed forces] is being carried out..."
> From *Caracol* II, Oventik: "…we say that this point is being carried out because there are *compañeras* integrated in all authority positions. There are women at the local, regional, and zone level positions. And there are *compañeras* occupying different military ranks… they have exercised their rights depending on their will and capacity."
> (Marcos 2014)

The EZLN and the Juntas are thus using their organisational powers to include more women in their activities and to lobby the general Zapatista population about the importance of gender equality. As a result, more women are being encouraged and trained in how to speak up for themselves, fight, attend meetings and take the lead on Junta projects. As we have seen, however, patriarchal gender roles and divisions of labour are still very prevalent.

Café Libertad, like the Zapatista co-operatives, is an egalitarian collective run by its members, but a much smaller one consisting of a handful of individuals rather than hundreds of member farms. All major decisions in Café Libertad are made in staff meetings where everybody has formally equal input – there is no manager and no member of the collective officially has more overall decision-making power than any other. Meetings function through consensus decision-making in normal cases. In contrast to majority voting, a model in which a number of set options are presented to the group and the option that gets the most votes is chosen, consensus decision-making aims to find a solution that all members can consent to (but not necessarily actively agree with), even if that requires revisiting the options on offer or ending up with decisions that are more complex than a simple yes or no to a proposal (Seeds for Change 2013). The momentum of consensus decision-making is rather different from that of majority

voting: instead of different factions competing to win with their preferred option, consensus is partly about co-operating and partly about struggling respectfully with all other members to find common ground, listen to each other's needs and reach compromises. These compromises do not need to be permanent or final: as Mouffe argues, a consensus can only be a 'temporary […] stabilisation of power'; not the result of an objective and fair reasoning but of a process of conversion and struggle (1999).

On the downside, consensus decision-making can be a lengthy process. Especially if opinions diverge strongly, reaching consensus may require a lot of discussion, energy and time. Therefore, sometimes a member of Café Libertad may choose not to argue with a proposal they disagree with if the overwhelming majority of the other members support it. As one interviewee said, 'in not so heavy cases, […] if it's five against one, it's crazy [to seek consensus]' (Folkert in interview 8 Nov 2012). Most decisions of any import are done through consensus, however. This is not always any easy process for the members and when consensus cannot be reached crisis can occur, leading in the worst cases to members leaving the collective, or even the collective splitting into two.

> The most problems we have [in the collective overall] are about working together, to talk to each other, to make decisions, that was always the problem. […] We try to decide with one voice but it's difficult. […] Sometimes somebody vetoes, and we can do nothing. So there are sometimes hard discussions. […] We've had two splits, that was really hard. (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012)

A second problem is that it can be difficult to reconcile the desire for equality with the desire to capture the skill and knowledge of more experienced members. As several commentators point out, making use of some members' superior skill whilst avoiding informal hierarchies is a fine balance (Crass 2003; Cornell 2011, 2014). On the one hand, participatory decision-making emphasises the equal say and equal value of all members, but on the other hand, it can be costly for an organisation to omit to let those with more experience or skill have greater influence on some collective decisions (Cornell 2011). A member who has years of experience doing the collective's finances, for example, is likely to be able to bring insights about financial issues that members who have never worked in finance could. Finding a good balance between giving everybody equal say and giving more weight to highly informed opinions is a constant challenge (Ibid.). When I visited Café Libertad for my fieldwork, the members had varying levels of experience and skill. Some had founded Café Libertad and therefore been responsible for all aspects of the organisation at its inception; they had visited the Zapatistas in Mexico many times, and they were in their 50s and 60s with lifelong experience of working in progressive or radical organisations. Other members were new to the organisation, new to Zapatista

solidarity, and in their 20s or 30s. This resulted in an unresolved tension around egalitarian decision-making, with Café Libertad members feeling they constantly balance imperfectly between giving everybody equal say and giving more weight to highly informed opinions. All of my interviewees expressed some form of tension around the functionality of Café Libertad's decision-making, mixed with feelings that such tension is unavoidable, acceptable, productive, and difficult.

4-3. ENTANGLEMENTS

As we saw above, the division of value-added in this chain is a traditional colonial one – the Zapatistas grow raw coffee and Café Libertad trades it and subcontracts its roasting and packaging. This is one of many conventional patterns of the colonial matrix of power that the actors in this case study are unable to disentangle. This colonial division of labour is connected to a broader North/South division whereby people in Germany are better resourced and protected than people in Mexico, especially indigenous people in Chiapas.

Germany has been known as a bastion of high-technology engineering and research for at least a century, and today it is one of the most influential economies in the world. The city of Hamburg has a population of around 3.2 million and a GDP per capita of 48,710 USD (Brookings 2012). Although there are pockets and incidences of poverty in all German cities, Hamburg is very affluent from a global perspective, and only 14-15% of the population live below the official relative poverty line. For most of those in need, there is a rudimentary social security network of income benefits, housing programmes and health care. There is also very high quality infrastructure (water, sanitation, communications, transport, electricity, etc) available to the vast majority of Hamburg's residents. Politically, Germany is part of the G7 group of powerful nations and has strong roles in IGOs such as the WTO and EU, which means it has the ability to influence supra-state laws and conventions in its favour.

The Zapatista coffee farmers are in a very different situation. Spain ruled Mexico for over 300 years, extracting enormous quantities of gold and silver as well as settling in Mexico and taxing and enslaving the indigenous population, violently establishing white Spaniards as a ruling race (Cocker 1998: 99, 106-107). The Zapatistas have always been expressive about the discrimination and exploitation most of its members have experienced as a result of the racist divisions that were created and restructured during colonialism, both within Mexico and in the world at large. As Subcomandante Marcos put it in a speech in October 1995:

> They [our ancestors] taught us to be proud of the color of our skin, of our language, of our culture. More than 500 years of exploitation and persecution have not been able to exterminate us. […] Different doctrines and many different ideas have been used to cover ethnocide with rationality. Today, the thick mantle with which they try to cover their crime is called neoliberalism, and it represents death and misery for the original people of these lands, and for all of those of a different skin color but with a single indigenous heart that we call Mexicans. […] But the color of the skin does not define the indigenous person: dignity and the constant struggle to be better define him. Those who struggle together are brothers and sisters, regardless of the color of our skin or the language that we learned as children.
> (Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 2002: 75-76)

Chiapas is a Mexican state that encapsulates both urban and rural areas, so it is difficult to find data for Zapatista-specific coffee-growing regions. However, the state's GDP per capita is around 3,600 USD (Wainwright/Economist 2012) – the lowest of all Mexican states – and it's Human Development Index is 0.65 (UNDP 2012: 12), compared with Germany's 0.92 (UNDP 2013: 144). Around a quarter of homes in the state do not have running water, 85.7% of households cook their food on wood or coal fires, 17.8% of the population over 15 years of age are illiterate, and a quarter of the population is affected by malnutrition (SIPaz 2012). Infrastructure such as plumbing, electricity, communications and transport is patchy, and many Zapatista farms are located several miles away from the nearest road or electricity line (Co-operative Coffees 2007, Martinez-Torres 2006). The EZLN have always been outspoken about the poverty and state neglect and oppression Zapatista communities experience (Subcomandante Marcos in Autonomedia 1994: 22-23).

These broader inequalities between North and South, or between rural indigenous people and Mexico's urban elite, affect and limit what the Zapatistas and Café Libertad are able to do – yet their prefiguativism does not, strictly speaking, seek to abolish those inequalities in all forms or for everybody. As 'politics of the act', prefigurative trading is not designed to liberate entire societies from oppression in any direct or controlled way, because any large scale universalist revolution would reproduce rather than challenge hegemonism (Day 2005). While both Café Libertad and the Zapatistas also occasionally engage in 'politics of demand', their prefigurative trading does thus not seek any simultaneous or universal redesign of 'the global economic system' or its North/South divide. Rather than 'a system', the global economy is in this view understood as a complex of interactions; any radical pluriversalisation of global economic relations must itself be pluriversal. This leads to the perhaps striking observation that, while the North/South divide affects and restricts these two actors' trading, the trading is itself not

directly intended to replace this macro scale divide with any new world order. This logic, which is central to prefigurative politics, is often misinterpreted and will be dealt with in greater depth in chapter 7.

Instead of seeking to reform it, the EZLN has taken a stance for complete autonomy from the Mexican government, calling on all Zapatista communities to refuse paying any taxes or taking any aid or social provisions from the state (Reyes and Kaufman 2011). Though coffee farmers sometimes breach this principle, most social welfare is provided by the Zapatista communities independently of the Mexican government, without all the privileges that come with statehood. To be able to enforce some level of autonomy the EZLN has waged an armed conflict with the Mexican government since 1983 (Captain Roberto in Autonomedia Editorial Collective 1994: 60-61). The use of physical force and the maintenance of an armed guerrilla might at first glance appear to contradict the principles of prefigurative politics. If prefigurativism is about creating desired ends in the here and now, then why engage in armed conflict? Even desired ends, however, must deal with the reality of human behaviour: even in a 'better' society physical force may have a conceivable role, for example as self-defence against violence, which is how the Zapatistas perceive their armed actions (EZLN 2002a).

The most high-profile battle of the EZLN was the armed uprising on the first of January 1994, which was a response to the Mexican government's signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement – a trade deal with the USA and Canada that granted unprecedented access by US American and Canadian businesses to Mexican markets (and vice versa). The EZLN released a statement in conjunction with the battle calling NAFTA 'nothing more than a death sentence to the Indigenous ethnicities of Mexico' (Subcomandante Marcos in Autonomedia 1994: 53). Since the USA and Canada (like Germany) are countries that have enormous economic and legal influence – and that have directly or indirectly controlled the loans Mexico's government has taken from the IMF and World Bank since the 1980s – it would have been difficult for Mexico's government to refuse signing NAFTA even if it had wanted to (Coote/Oxfam 1995: 5-6). After the flare-up of conflict in 1994, the EZLN finds itself in an ongoing 'low intensity conflict' consisting of occasional shootings and raids, and daily to weekly surveillance visits by the military on Zapatista territories (Kiptik 2014).

The geopolitical contexts in which the Zapatistas and Café Libertad find themselves are thus very disparate. As I will discuss at greater depth in a later chapter, there are questions that need clarification regarding dynamics between 'politics of the act' and 'politics of demand', as well as the boundaries between the two logics. For the moment, I wish to focus on the conditions these broader national and global inequalities place to

our two key actors. With a capillary interpretation of power, we can note that these inequalities not only limit the actions of the Zapatistas and Café Libertad in different ways, but they also shape and constitute both actors' aims and actions.

The inequality in resources and security between the two actors, together with differing ideas of what good business behaviour is, has exacerbated the difficulty of communicating across such great distances. Communication between the two organisations is mostly done via email, but also occasionally over the phone or even in person whenever Café Libertad members visit Chiapas, which happens once every year or two years (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). The language of communication is Spanish, which is not the native language of either most Zapatista coffee farmers or Café Libertad members (Ibid.; Martinez-Torres 2006). More importantly, while email is a fast mode of communication, and is also suitable for negotiating specific formulations, Zapatista coffee co-operative or Junta representatives do not always have reliable internet access, and email account passwords and emailing practices are sometimes forgotten or lost in the frequent handovers that come along with rotation of representatives (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Phone calls take place occasionally, but the seven-hour time difference along with the fact that only certain part-time staff at Café Libertad speak Spanish, and that phone networks can sometimes be unreliable in the Mexican rainforest, make phone conversations rare (Ibid.).

The institutional framework for communicating between the Zapatistas and Café Libertad is not very formalised, unlike those for internal communication, as we saw above. Though business issues such as prices and shipping dates are discussed thoroughly, the political and social aims and activities of the relationship between the two organisations are not often debated (Ibid.; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012). This could be seen as surprising given that this trading relationship is so heavily saturated with politics and political solidarity. Though solidarity and unity are aims in theory, in practice the Zapatistas and Café Libertad have their own separate aims and activities. Let us attempt to understand more about why this may be.

The relationship between the two actors was initiated by Folkert at Café Libertad in 1999, though it was built on existing exporting chains from the Zapatistas to other regions (Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Folkert first bought coffee from a US American trader and eventually got in direct contact with the Zapatistas himself, buying at first one pallet of coffee and slowly growing the business together with his friend and union comrade Gerrit. That the Zapatistas would export green coffee to be roasted in the

global North was a pre-existing arrangement: coffee has been exported from Chiapas since the 19th century and has always been an industry dominated by European and US American colonial interests, with farms initially being planted and owned mainly by Spanish, French, British and US American, and some Mexican, exporters who established the infrastructure (Martinez-Torres 2006: 48-57). This might be interpreted as Café Libertad being the most powerful and dominant actor in this relationship – or lead actor as GVC analysts would call it (Gibbon et al 2008: 316; 320) – since it is the party based in the core.

There exists, however, a less traditional imbalance in the relationship when it comes to who has the most influence. This imbalance stems from the fact that the Zapatistas, while relatively resource-poor, have a very strong and positive reputation worldwide, which puts them in a stronger bargaining position than Café Libertad in certain situations. The Zapatistas is one of the most oft-cited examples of successful contemporary revolutionary and prefigurative struggle in both academia and movement literature (see e.g. Gibson-Graham 2006b: xx; Sharzer 2012; Seeds for Change 2007). We can assume that most end-consumers of Café Libertad's Zapatista coffee have not heard of Café Libertad but know only that they are buying coffee made, in some vague sense of the word, by the Zapatistas. Added to this, Café Libertad was created as a Zapatista solidarity organisation and continues to see the support of the Zapatistas as its most central aim; it would be very difficult to imagine Café Libertad choosing to cease trading Zapatista coffee.

Meanwhile, the Zapatistas do not have a committed relationship to Café Libertad in return. Many are queuing up to buy Zapatista coffee, both in Mexico and abroad. As Café Libertad members told me, the demand is often larger than what the Zapatista co-operatives can supply, not only from solidarity groups but also from supermarkets and mainstream capitalist coffee traders (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Coffee trading middle men known as 'coyotes' travel round to the farms and offer cash up-front payments for green beans, which they later sell on to one of the large traders or multinational corporations on the international market (Ibid.; Milford 2013). Coyotes cannot usually offer a price that is anywhere near that paid by Café Libertad and other solidarity organisations, let alone offer the same kind of security, commitment, long-term planning, political solidarity, or premiums and donations as non-profits such as Café Libertad. When market prices go up, however, the offer of cash in hand at a half-decent price from a coyote – as opposed to selling through the established Zapatista co-operatives to a solidarity trader, with all the waiting and bureaucracy that entails – can be very attractive to a Zapatista coffee farmer who is struggling to stay afloat (Ibid.).

The Zapatistas are not dependent on Café Libertad for their survival since there are others who are willing to buy their coffee, but Café Libertad as an organisation is dependent on the Zapatistas for its existence (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012). This reveals different hierarchies simultaneously at play – some of which are based on money, and others on values or assets that cannot be valued in pecuniary terms. Café Libertad has power, resources and social security nets that the Zapatistas lack, by virtue of being located in the global North and being 'protected' by Northern governments' legal, military and economic power. The Zapatistas are highly dependent on somebody/anybody to buy their coffee, and the failure to find a buyer may have dire consequences for the farmers' personal wellbeing or even survival in extreme cases (Martinez-Torres 2006). Simultaneously, however, the Zapatistas own an ideological influence and a positive reputation among global radical left movements that Café Libertad lacks. While there is a lot of demand for Zapatista coffee all over the world, Café Libertad is only one of many solidarity coffee traders who specialise on Zapatista coffee. Café Libertad is highly dependent on *the Zapatistas in particular* for its survival *as an organisation*, though the failure of Café Libertad as an organisation would not have equally dire consequences for its members.

Café Libertad members all told me the Zapatistas show little or no political interest in their coffee buyers. This apparent lack of political interest in Café Libertad from the Zapatistas might be because either, or both, that the Zapatistas do not have to care about Café Libertad since the latter is such an insignificant actor in relation to the former (an interpretation that portrays the Zapatistas as the more powerful party), or that the Zapatistas are not able to make room for or express an interest in Café Libertad because they do not have the necessary information or resources to (an interpretation that portrays Café Libertad as the more powerful party since they are better resourced).

In interviews, Café Libertad members expressed partly a sense of disappointment that Zapatista representatives do not appear interested in discussing anything other than immediate business concerns, and partly a sense of sympathy:

> Gerrit: The Zapatista farmers' attitudes towards us could be more positive. They – the boards of the coffee co-operatives – define us as buyers, not as friends or a solidarity group. They are very reserved. Maybe people who live there with them for a longer time could build up a better relationship, but for us it's hard. One time I went to Chiapas to scout out new co-ops and visit some farms, and I had arranged this in advance with the Junta de Buen Gobierno. I arrived late at night, and they changed the plan last minute. They said I had to leave the next morning – they did not appreciate that I had come all

that way from Germany. So I had to leave the next morning without visiting the farm. [...]
Sofa: Do Zapatista farmers know or care about Café Libertad?
Gerrit: No, we make too few visits. The board members might know about us and a bit about who we are, but they change every 1-2 years. The Junta de Buen Gobierno changes every month. It would be a lot better if we were there physically, but we don't want to travel too much since that would cost us too much. We do visit at least every two years, but more than this would be difficult.
(Author interview 9 Nov 2012)

Stephan: [I]t's very difficult to reach them. We mostly speak to them via email. […] They mostly only respond if they have coffee to sell. Sometimes we write emails asking a list of questions [about non-business related things] and they just don't answer. […] The Zapatistas want to have a society of their own, they have the right to make their own decisions by themselves, that's what I like about the Zapatista movement.
Sofa: In more mainstream fairtrade relationships, often the people in Europe decide what the people in developing countries should want, they define what is good for them.
Stephan: Yes, and it's a European point of view and it's more or less, kind of a positive racism I suppose. Eurocentrism. Yeah, sometimes it's very hard because I always have my questions… We had a guy visiting us last year, he was from Mexico City, and he worked together with Zapatista *comandantes* so he had the political mandate to tell us what the Zapatistas want or don't want. And we asked him a lot of questions, and he was really not polite to us [laughs]. We have a lot of criticism of the Zapatistas and we thought it was okay to just ask stuff, but the culture is different. The Zapatistas, because they are indigenous they are more close in their own communities. If I went there and asked questions I'd be thrown out maybe [laughs].
(Author interview 8 Nov 2012)

One case in point illustrating the lack of formalised communication strategies between the two actors (I call it a lack, though it appears to be an active choice) is the negotiation of prices and payments. Negotiating the price of the coffee ahead of each year's shipment is the most sensitive part of the relationship according to members of Café Libertad. Representatives of both parties meet and discuss, sometimes in person if Café Libertad manage to time a visit to Mexico around contract renewal season, but usually via email or phone. The negotiations are centred around a short contract of one A4 page that is kept deliberately simple, avoiding long lists of clauses or detailed specifications. The contract states that any disputes shall be resolved amicably as between friends, i.e. without the involvement of legal institutions. As the contract puts it, in the simple and minimalist style characteristic of the whole document: *'Arbitraje: amistoso, si es necesario'* ('Arbitration: friendly, if necessary'). This short phrase replaces the multiple pages of clauses and scenarios in technocratic language that can normally be found in business contracts. Though this phrase gives an impression that no formal arbitration

strategies are ever necessary, there are some situations in which the lack of pre-arranged solutions creates difficulty.

Café Libertad always pays 60% of the total price in advance, i.e. before any coffee has been shipped. This is a practice borrowed from the FLO Fairtrade certification system, where the importers 'must provide pre-finance *up to* 60% of the contract value' (Fairtrade Foundation 2011: §3.03.02, emphasis added), though many FLO Fairtrade importers charge the producers interest on that pre-payment, unlike Café Libertad. More than once, however, the Zapatistas have asked for more money, outside of contractual agreements. For example, Folkert described one incident whereby one of the Zapatista coffee co-operatives had asked for more pre-payment, having already received the interest-free 60%, to cover the cost of sacks to package the green coffee into.

> Folkert: [T]he chair of the co-operative gave all the money [the 60% pre-payment] to the members, because the world market price was getting higher and higher and the coyotes, they told us, were hanging around the villages and saying 'we'll pay you more and more'. So the chair said that he had to give more. So they spent all the money from our pre-payment as pre-payment to the members so they wouldn't sell to the coyotes. And then, they had to spend a part for the sending of the green coffee from the members' farms [to the co-operative's facilities] to sort it, then they had to send it by truck to the harbour, and then they had to pay the export papers. And they gave up the money, and in this case they said 'oh we don't have the money for bags'. And then they asked [us for more money …]. […] They've also asked us for 100,000 euros to help them build a warehouse. And I say: from where? Heh? [...] I think they think we are rich people. Yeah, for them we are rich, but here we are not rich. […]
> (Author interview 8 Nov 2012)

The contract states that this dispute should be solved in a friendly manner – but what this means in practice is little more than confusion and frustration. It is almost as if the two parties have opted out of prefiguring alternative relations on this point: resolving disputes through 'friendly' relations is an instruction so vague that it in practice amounts to a reversion to all parties' own assumptions about what 'friendly' means or what correct conduct is. This lack of a spelled-out prefigurative alternative creates particular difficulty between such differently resourced actors. What this example also shows is how the capitalist mainstream creates difficulties for this prefigurative trading. Since the Zapatistas are resource-poor and they require money to pay for basic necessities, they are sometimes forced to prioritise their own short-term interests over longer-term or collective interests.

What became clear from my interviews was that Café Libertad and the Zapatistas have

very different expectations and norms when it comes to communication and discussion. There is a mismatch between what Café Libertad wants and expects (for example, prompt e-mail response, frequent and clear communication, sticking to time schedules, to-the-point communication that also leaves room for personal greetings) and what the Zapatistas seem to want and expect (e.g. flexibility in delivery times, cutting down unnecessary e-mail contact, maximising financial gain even if that means breaking delivery schedule promises). Some of these differences may be rooted in material inequalities and others in cultural norms and behaviours across continental and North/South divides.

It is also possible to interpret the Zapatistas' disinterest in Café Libertad's politics through Scott's notion of the 'Weapons of the Weak' (1985): if Zapatista coffee farmers and co-operative delegates perceive themselves to be less powerful than Café Libertad (which, as we have seen, is one of at least two possible interpretations of the power balance in this trading relationship), they may be choosing disengagement from dialogue and the stretching of contractual agreements as expressions of resistance to being placed in a subordinate position.

Hirschman posits that actors tend to exit business relationships when the chance of their voice being listened to by the other actor is minimal, and when there exist palatable alternatives to continuing the relationship (1970: 38, 77). Scott, meanwhile, emphasises that subordinate groups tend to use 'everyday' forms of resistance when the cost of retaliation is too high to risk engaging in overt resistance (1985: xv). Given that the Zapatistas' coffee is highly sought-after by both prefigurative solidarity buyers and coyotes, Hirschman's explanation appears more applicable in this case: perhaps the (real of perceived) unlikelihood of being heard by Café Libertad, and the availability of both other forms of political expression (such as EZLN communiqués, Caracol statements, etc) and other buyers for their coffee, have led the Zapatistas to abstain from direct dialogue concerning value with Café Libertad, and to stretch contractual agreements. This must be understood, however, alongside the fact that Zapatista coffee farmers are very resource-poor and live under constant military threat from the Mexican government. In other words, the Zapatista coffee farmers both desperately need more resources (such as money and time) and can afford to demand them from Café Libertad (by asking for increased pre-payment or by disengaging from dialogue). As this situation has not been discussed or analysed by the Zapatistas and Café Libertad, the result is confusion and disgruntlement along with bewildered sympathy for the latter – and unknown to this research project for the former.

Aside from dysfunctional intra-organisational communication, the problematic of

resource-poverty finds another expression on Zapatista farms, relating to farm ownership and the sharing of wealth within farms. At the risk of generalising about a population that is too varied and diverse, Zapatista coffee farms are owned and run by families, i.e. people who are usually but not always connected by blood or marriage and who live their lives together, and the power structures that exist within families are thus also those that govern the farm as a productive unit. Overall the ownership of farms should be understood as collective – there are not shareholders or individual propertied owners in the capitalist sense (Vergara-Camus 2014: 189). In most cases all work on the farm is carried out by family members and friends, and the money distributed on a needs basis, but there have been a small number of reports of casual wage labourers being employed and paid low wages when extra help is needed (Tlapil 2014; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). This wage labour could be seen as a form of capitalist exploitation, especially since wages are very low – however, wages are low for the general Zapatista population, so this relatively rare practice should not be interpreted as some people becoming rich off the labour of others. Nonetheless, these labourers work seasonally for a wage. This constitutes another example of how financial limitations push Zapatista farmers to make short-term decisions – hiring casual labourers, keeping them outside of farm ownership, refraining from guaranteeing the labourers a secure income.

Finally we must also note that patriarchal divisions remain in this case study, despite the feminist efforts outlines above. The most obvious influence of patriarchy is the gendered divisions of labour and participation in political representation among Zapatista coffee farmers. Women have for a long time been subordinate in Mexican society as well as in the communities the Zapatistas emerged from, and most of them have not had equal respect, authority, education, security, or freedom as men. Traditional gender norms whereby men predominantly carry out certain tasks – agricultural labour in the fields, woodwork, metalwork, political work; essentially any work happening firmly outside of the home or home-sphere – and women other tasks – cooking, cleaning, childcare, sewing, collection of water and firewood – still remain (Marcos 2014; Millán 1998). The same is true, in some cases, of social behavioural roles whereby women are not allowed out on their own, are not free to decide who to marry or whether to have children, are not able to head a household or hold positions of authority or political leadership, among other things (Ibid.). The situation has changed somewhat since the uprising in 1994, though many Zapatista women report that their lives are still similar on a daily level. As some Zapatista women put it in a 2004 documentary film produced by Junta de Buen Gobierno Caracol III in 2005:

> Woman 1: 'Now life is a little different, but we still haven't achieved what we want, we continue to live almost the same way as our ancestors lived.'

> Woman 2: 'The men do not help us with our work. We wake up at three o'clock in the morning and start sweeping the house and everything else. We make coffee, give some to our husband and then he leaves to go to work in the fields. We stay at home to do other work. […] We have so much work to do in the house; it's like having two or three jobs to do in all one day. We get up at three o'clock in the morning and sometimes we don't go to bed until ten or eleven o'clock at night.'
> Woman 3: 'Even if it is Saturday or Sunday I have to work, I never rest. My husband can rest on Saturday or Sunday.'
> Woman 4: 'Before 1994 we could not leave the house at all because of a tradition that men have of saying that anything women do is worthless. And since we didn't know anything about our rights a man could say and do whatever he wanted, even hit you. And if you would go and denounce him, they would fine the woman as well as the man. […] Now, well, things have changed a little.'
> Woman 5: 'Since 1994 things started to change a little bit; now we can go out and participate […]. Today is better because there is real justice for everybody. Now when we leave the house the men don't say anything because they see [that] what people used to say, that we will only do bad things when we go out, is not true.'
> (Quotes from Audiovisuales de los Caracoles Zapatistas 2005)

Though this is the most obvious appearance of patriarchy in this case study, patriarchal assumptions are also implicit in many of the expressions of the colonial matrix already described. The economic policies of the state and IGOs, and the openly violent behaviour of the former, are founded upon patriarchal and masculine norms and ideas. So are the 'economic realities' of capitalism that both parties must take into account: earning enough money, competing successfully against others in the market, and at times prioritising the own short-term self-interest over long-term or collective interests.

4-4. CONCLUSION

The contexts in which the Zapatistas and Café Libertad operate pose several challenges to prefiguring egalitarian solidarity trade. Both actors must earn enough money to survive; the Zapatistas is a large and renowned organisation while Café Libertad is small and unknown; the Zapatistas have unreliable access to email and phone while Café Libertad prefer those modes of communication; both actors' behavioural expectations differ; communications channels between the two organisations are informal and lack the deliberate and thoughtful design of their internal communication channels. The Zapatistas may, in addition, be disengaging from dialogue about value as a ‘weapon of the weak’ (Scott 1985). Nevertheless, a deliberate politics of value is being waged, and it transcends the limited capitalist understanding of value.

These two actors have very unequal starting positions – one lives in the poor periphery and the other in the rich core – but this broader context, the 'outside world', also influences the organisations' own internal behaviours and organisational forms. The outside world is not, after all, so clearly distinguishable from the inside. That is to say, the colonial matrix of power does not only provide a context for humans to live in (like an enclosure for some sheep) but it is part of constituting their very being (the sheep are made up of the grass, the water, and the other sheep in the enclosure). Far from an orthodox or utopian exercise, prefigurative politics is messy business. The aims and ideals towards which one prefigures are in several ways entangled in the colonial matrix – but by the same token, the matrix also becomes re-entangled with that which is prefigured.

The Zapatistas – Café Libertad relationship is markedly different from a conventional coffee industry one: a larger share of the price than usual goes to the producers, the price is stable, the relationship is politically motivated and committed rather than fleeting or price-dependent. Ownership structures are collective and democratic, and the aims of this trading relationship are open for discussion and struggle rather than predefined in favour of Eurocentric or capitalist values. However, as a result of ingrained patriarchal beliefs, of modernist assumptions and of capitalist pressures, several aspects of this relationship remains conventionally hierarchical. Further to this, the infrastructure through which people can speak and listen about value *across* these two organisations is at times dysfunctional, and at times non-existent – there is much room for improvement here.

That prefigurativism is messy and polluted is no secret and is not only visible to external observers. The Café Libertad members I spoke to were very open about this fact: it is not uncommon to be forced to choose between several unpleasant options, and oftentimes these prefigurative activists are appalled by the actions they must take. For example, one interview at Café Libertad told me:

> Michael: I think Café Libertad is both [ideal and not ideal] – on the one hand it's a good example of how things can work, on the other hand we have to relate to the conditions that we exist in. Because we are not free. Café Libertad does good work, but it's not perfect. And nothing can be perfect in the neoliberal capitalist [context]. But it's an experience, an experiment, doing by trial and error. And this is a part of the Zapatista movement too, working by trial and error to make a different type of world. [...]
> Sofa: Do you think Café Libertad and the Zapatistas are equal?
> Michael: No, all solidarity work from Europe is a hierarchical thing because we have more money here, we have different opportunities. And I think that's an important point to see,

> that they have a different kind of life. I think it's important not to have a paternalistic or patronising attitude, and when you look at the Zapatistas they seem really conscious of themselves. They are aware of hierarchies [...]. And it's important to be aware that we have different conditions here, that there are hierarchies, to start to have an equal relationship with those different conditions in mind.
> (Author interview 12 Nov 2012)

Rather than present their activities as the final solution, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad openly acknowledge the *political* aspects of their trading, the constancy of struggle. The 'upgrade' they seek is an enhanced ability for oppressed people to make their voices heard in this struggle – which includes but goes far beyond charging a higher price for coffee beans. GVC analysis is not currently able to make sense of a case study such as this one. Social upgrade is a GVC concept that comes closer than economic upgrade to what the actors in this case study are aiming for, but in GVC analysis this concept has been separated from the notion of value. Indeed, the fact that this literature distinguishes between economic and social upgrade at all is a testament to its entrenchment in modern-capitalist economism.

In the next chapter we will encounter our second case study, the South African trader Turqle and two of its suppliers. Studying this second case study allows us to build on our understanding of what (dis)entanglement of and in the colonial matrix might look like. We will also gain a greater understanding of the role of self-organisation in facilitating disentanglement.

Chapter 5

Turqle, Bomvu and Luhlaza

5-1. INTRODUCTION

In a very different way from the previous case study, Turqle focuses explicitly on economic and social upgrading in the GVC sense. Unlike Café Libertad or the Zapatistas, Turqle describes itself as a trader that aims to add value in the global South, more specifically South Africa, and that exports only shelf-ready products from its suppliers to its European buyers (see Turqle 2014d). It also promotes social upgrade in the form of improved working conditions, worker representation and provision of training and education. Another aspect that makes this second case study particularly interesting, especially in relation to the previous case, is that Turqle works with supplier groups who have not organised themselves. Unlike the Zapatistas, the workers whose products Turqle trades do not identify themselves as a unified group and do not speak to each other. This places Turqle in the position of seeking to empower the workers themselves – something that is difficult to impose on somebody else.

Mirroring the previous chapter, I aim to show through this second case study that disentanglement of the colonial matrix tends to coexist with continued entanglement. At the same time, disentanglements are influential on the workings of the matrix: while entanglements limit disentanglements, the reverse is also true. When a worker, for example, experiences a wage increase even though labour market forces are pulling wages downwards, or when a person of colour is encouraged and subsidised to take an advanced course and aim for employment in traditionally white-dominated professions, the colonial matrix is pulled and stretched in places – perhaps even torn – as old relations are replaced with new, however contingently. For the people involved and affected, such a disentanglement can change the world significantly. For those who witness or learn of it, it challenges epistemological universalism.

In this chapter I outline the main ways in which Turqle, Bomvu and Luhlaza experience as well as challenge the colonial matrix of power. We will see that European colonialism has placed most inhabitants of South Africa in an economically peripheral position, and created a racist social order that privileges some bodies over others. We will see that capitalocentrism has rendered non-capitalist business forms such as co-operatives virtually unthinkable in the Western Cape. The notion that business must be privately owned by a privileged elite, and that the transfer of value from workers to owners is the natural engine of production, has left most of the population in low-paid and exploitative

wage labour. Furthermore, like the previous case study, Turqle and its suppliers must survive in a competitive market in order to stay afloat. Androcentrism, finally, pushes men and women towards different places in a gendered division of labour, at least in some working class communities. While women and men are largely interchangeable within Turqle and the higher-tier management and ownership of Bomvu and Luhlaza, gender determines workers' job roles in Bomvu especially. Except in the middle class, which typically employs women of colour as housekeepers, women also tend to do more unpaid housework at home in South African society. A more invisible form of androcentrism already underlies the basic principles of capitalism and Eurocentrism: competition, conquest, accumulation, hierarchy. Across all social categories, and across the world, gender remains a regulator of personal behaviour and identity.

Turqle has devised three main strategies for disentangling the matrix. Firstly it promotes functional and social upgrade in its suppliers, meaning it supports these companies in acquiring higher value-added production tasks and positions in global value chains (for example, becoming able to export shelf-ready bottles of barbecue sauce to Europe instead of producing only raw materials for the local market), and in giving better wages and working conditions for their staff. Secondly it has founded a Fair Trade Trust that diverts some of the trading income to an education- and training fund. This fund pays for staff training that benefits both the workplace and the individual workers. It also pays school tuition fees for the workers' children. Thirdly, Turqle prefigures an egalitarian organisational structure in its own make-up, and requires that its suppliers put in place certain egalitarian features in their internal governance. Contrarily, however, the Fair Trade Trust is not governed in an egalitarian way, which I argue limits its prefigurative power.

When it comes to struggles over value, there are significant challenges for Turqle and the staff of its suppliers. When Turqle has invited workers to express their views on where the Trust should spend its money – in other words what one of its two main strands of activity should focus on – workers have partly showed disinterest and partly given answers that Turqle believe cannot be 'right'. Instead of asking for sensible spending on education and training, workers have asked for luxury consumer products, personal debt support and better housing. The workers' failure or refusal to play along with the conventional development script might be due to a lack of resources and skills, or to a resentment of being placed in the position of development recipient (or both). Crucially, the workers who are eligible for the benefits of the Trust have not defined themselves as a group and do not communicate with each other across workplaces. In sharp contrast to the Zapatistas, these workers have not created their own political institutions or identity; rather it is Turqle, the Fair Trade Trust and this research project that declares

them an entity.

I start this chapter with a brief introduction to the organisations in this case study. After that, following the structure of the last chapter, I outline the main prefigurative strategies Turqle deploys in order to disentangle the colonial matrix, then the ways in which entanglement in the matrix remains. In concluding I reflect on what this case study can tell us about value struggles and upgrade. That Turqle invited factory workers to have their say about the Trust and found refusal/trouble instead of compliant participation might tell us something not only about the entanglement of disentanglement, but also about the basic preconditions of a dialogue about value.

5-1.1 Introduction to Turqle, Bomvu and Luhlaza

As a former settler-colony and a present member of the Commonwealth, South Africa's colonial experience is much documented and discussed (e.g. Hochschild 2007). As an extractive colony, South Africa was a source of slaves, and later also gold, diamonds, wool and wine during most of the modern period (Boahen 1990: 183; Feinstein 2005: 22-32). Today, many of these exports remain, along with platinum, coal and iron (Simoes et al/MIT 2015). Though some of these commodities are expensive, the wealth resulting from them has not generally accrued to indigenous populations. Classifying South Africa as either a core or a peripheral country is difficult since domestic inequalities are so strong: some, largely urban and disproportionately white, populations occupy a core position in the global economy, and others, disproportionately black or coloured, occupy peripheral positions. (The term 'coloured' is a racial category formalised under Apartheid referring to people of mixed race and/or descending from South and South-East Asian countries from which slaves were trafficked during colonialism.) This is a long-standing division that has led many commentators to speak of South Africa as a country of two nations: the rich white and the poor black and coloured. Since the formal end of Apartheid, however, race has become somewhat less of a determinant of socio-economic class, and the class system is today more complex and less bipolar (Nattrass and Seekings 2001). Nonetheless, South Africa is a country of exceptional socio-economic divisions. As a 2009 study showed, the average GDP of white South Africans was almost seven times that of black South Africans (135,707 vs. 19,496 ZAR), and almost five times that of coloureds (27,569 ZAR) (Colitt and Exman 2009). Most South Africans are not wealthy, and by country aggregate figures at least half of South African exports are raw or lower value-added materials (Simoes et al/MIT 2015). Looking more specifically at the rural Western Cape region, it lacks strong value-added export industries and largely sustains itself through basic resource extraction and agriculture (Western Cape Government 2015). The Western Cape region, excluding urban Cape

Town, could thus be categorised as peripheral.

Even though they are located in the same province, Turqle and their supplier companies could be described as existing on opposite sides of the North/South divide, though this categorisation should not be understood as absolute. Turqle is situated in the Cape Town ward of Tableview, an affluent suburb in the Northern part of the city. Tableview has a Socio-Economic Status Index (a governmental composite measurement of income, educational and occupational indicators) of 9.50 – one of the highest in the city (City of Cape Town 2001). 94% of the labour force in this suburb is employed, only 14% of households have an income of 3,200 rand or less, and 99% of residents have all modern conveniences in their home such as running water, sewage, rubbish collection, electricity, etc (City of Cape Town 2011). Notably, Tableview is 62% populated by white people, though only 8.9% of South Africans in the country as a whole are white (Ibid.). The permanent staff of Turqle are all white as well as highly educated, and they live comfortably with all modern conveniences much like any middle class worker would live in a Northern European city.

Bomvu and Luhlaza, meanwhile, are both based in less affluent rural areas with significantly lower socio-economic indicators than Tableview. (Since the staff at these producer companies have taken part in interviews on the premise that their anonymity would be preserved, I cannot offer specific statistical detail.) These two localities are poorer but not destitute rural towns, with most people but not everybody having at least some access to modern conveniences and infrastructure. Many of the staff working for these companies live in underprivileged areas, 'townships', with patchy access to electricity, sewage and paved roads. Both towns are more ethnically diverse than Tableview, but have a higher than national average share of the ethnicity known as coloureds and a slightly higher than national-average share of whites (Statistics South Africa 2014).

Like Café Libertad, Turqle is a middle link in its supply chains. Turqle is based in Cape Town and focuses on exporting products from the surrounding Western Cape region to Central and Western Europe, mainly the Netherlands and Germany, but also to a lesser extent Australia. Turqle has four members of staff who all work in an office in Cape Town, ranging from part-time to full time. Turqle trades around 160 different products, all food items including fine cooking oils, sauces, dressings, seasonings, spice blends and jams (Turqle 2014a). It does not make any products in-house, rather, it helps nearby producer companies find buyers in Europe who will pay a good 'fair trade' price and offer good terms. These buyers are fair trade retailers, world shops and also some supermarkets.

What sets Turqle apart from almost every other fair or political trader is that it actively focuses on shifting value-added, in the GVC sense, to the producers it works with. Turqle provides all the services a producer company might need when seeking to export their products to Europe: where previously these companies were selling bulk materials or non-branded products, with Turqle's help they can export their own shelf-ready products to European retailers. Turqle's work consists mainly of product and label design, logistics, marketing and health & safety/quality standards monitoring support. In other words, Turqle will for example train producers in how to comply with food standards, will help with paperwork, design labels that are more suitable for the European market, help with logistics to enable producers to meet orders that would otherwise have been too much for them.

Figure 5.1: Cape Town (Yellow) and the Western Cape Region (Light Beige)

In addition to their trading and marketing work Turqle run a 'Fair Trade Trust', similar to Café Libertad's Zapatista support fund premium. At least 2.5% of the FOB sale price of every product goes into the Trust. (FOB sale price refers to the sale price Turqle receives from its European importers at the point of shipment, rather than the final retail price that the customer pays in the shop.) This is then invested into longer-term upgrading projects for the producer companies and their employees (Turqle 2014b). The Trust pays for the school fees of all children of all workers who work for a company that supplies Turqle. It also pays for the training of the workers themselves, whether training in the workplace (how to adhere to health & safety standards, IT skills, management skills, HIV awareness, personal budgeting and financial training...) or outside the

workplace (individual workers getting a driving license, learning a language, taking private classes in something that will help them in their careers...). In return for these services Turqle takes a cut of the price of the products, which is how it earns its living. Turqle was founded in 1997 and today works with up to 15 producer companies at any one time, who in turn employ almost 500 people in total.

Turqle is not so much a co-operative as a collective of equal specialised experts: if Café Libertad is a workplace where job rotation is encouraged, Turqle is a workplace based on specialism. The four roles within Turqle are:
Pieter: Finance, operations, logistics, and the Fair Trade Trust
Rain: Strategy, 'words & pictures', label art and printing
Linda: Quality systems, social audits and monitoring
Sarah: Range and product development, South African retail market, social audits
(Turqle 2014c; Rain in interview 3 Sept 2013; Linda in interview 11 Sept 2013)

There are no other permanent members of staff – instead Turqle outsources tasks such as accountancy, premises management, bespoke label-application and packaging and any additional administrative tasks to external companies or independent individuals. When it comes to the training that Turqle's Fair Trade Trust offers its suppliers companies' factory staff, this is entirely outsourced and currently being carried out by a local development NGO called Philani. That Turqle outsources so many jobs to so many different companies means it would be an enormous task to map and analyse all material divisions – and since the interesting relationship in the light of the global division of labour is not that between Turqle and its *subcontractors*, but that between Turqle and its *suppliers*, I will not do so here.

Instead I have focused on two of Turqle's suppliers for this case study: Bomvu and Luhlaza. These names are fabricated to protect the anonymity of research participants. Bomvu simply means 'red' in the local Xhosa language, and Luhlaza means 'blue' or 'green'.

Bomvu is a factory that produces seasoning. This company employs about 20 staff and sells its produce to South African supermarkets as well as to Europe through Turqle. It is a privately owned company that considers itself socially progressive since it pays higher wages than other factories and offers better working conditions. Most of its staff work in full-time and permanent roles, but others are employed on a casual basis depending on seasonal workload. Most of the staff work in manufacturing and a smaller number in company administration and sales. Luhlaza is a farm and factory that produces condiments. This company employs about 25 staff and sells fruit and vegetable produce

to South African supermarkets as well as shelf-ready condiments through Turqle. Like Bomvu, Luhlaza is privately owned yet considers itself socially progressive, and it employs a small number of casual staff as well as its usual permanent workers. Again, the majority of workers perform manual factory tasks, and a small number do the administrative work.

Both Bomvu and Luhlaza have worked with Turqle since the latter's inception. Turqle has helped both companies acquire capabilities and access European markets that they were not previously able to. All workers who work for these companies receive a bursary from the Trust to cover their children's school fees, as well as various training courses and accreditation opportunities for themselves.

5-2. DISENTANGLEMENTS

If we look at Turqle's activities overall, we can see that Turqle has three main prefigurative responses to the colonial matrix of power: it helps its suppliers produce and export finished products, it provides education and training for workers through its Fair Trade Trust, and it supports egalitarian forms of organisation inside businesses.

Unlike Café Libertad, Turqle exists in a context where it is able to focus on exporting shelf-ready products from its suppliers rather than raw materials. Turqle holds the idea of counteracting the global division of labour through keeping as much value-added as possible in South Africa as central to its work. Its website states:

> 'OUR CORE VALUES – WHAT GUIDES US [...] Turqle believe products should be beneficiated in South Africa – the manufacturing revenue needs to stay in South Africa. We need to build industries with infrastructure.' 'It is about ADDING VALUE in South Africa.' (Turqle 2014c; 2014d).

Since its inception in 1997, Turqle has helped several businesses in the Western Cape region develop the capacity to export their products to Europe, always completely shelf-ready, and sometimes with their own company's brand names. When Turqle started it worked with three producers: Bomvu, Luhlaza, and a third firm. Pieter estimates that these three producers had 17 employees between them, selling a small range of products made by hand. Since then, Turqle has handled large percentages of these firms' sales – as well as an increasing number of other firms, which today total around 15 companies employing almost 500 people. In 1997 Luhlaza was able to produce around 1,500 jars per week of a given product if they were producing only one type of product and were working at maximum capacity. Today, thanks to reinvestment of exporting revenues

earned through Turqle into machines and staff, Luhlaza can produce more than 150,000 jars each week.

Many of the services Turqle provides to its suppliers revolve around assisting them in achieving shelf-ready output. Most of the suppliers would not have had such capabilities without Turqle's help. What Turqle might offer includes market research to find out whether the supplier's products would be marketable in Europe; help to find interested distributors in Europe; design of product recipes and labelling; support in gaining necessary food standard certifications, and more. Turqle may also lend, or in rare cases donate, money or resources to allow a supplier to finish a product, i.e. make it shelf-ready, rather than export a raw or bulk material. For example, there was once a situation where Bomvu could not afford to pay for the transport of glass bottles from the glass factory to its own factory, so it could not pack the product into the bottles. The glass factory was many hours' drive away and the shipment of bottles quite small, only one pallet. Whereas the cheapest option would have been for Turqle to subcontract the packing and labelling to some other factory nearer the glass factory, they decided to pay for the transport of the bottles – as well as the bottle caps and labels – to Bomvu so that Bomvu could carry out the packaging of the product, thereby creating employment for its workers.

To illustrate the difference Turqle makes to their producers in terms of financial value-added, Turqle's website provides a comparison between a non-Turqle FLO-Fairtrade certified pepper grinder, and a spice grinder of their own (Turqle 2014e). In this hypothetical example, as in most real-life FLO-certified products, the final manufacturing and packaging takes place in Europe. As Turqle's website explains, only around 5 or 6 percent of the final retail price ends up in the global South, while the rest stays mostly in Europe. To distinguish itself from this example, Turqle shows how its trading is different, see Figure 5.2. 'In the Turqle model, there is an equitable split – almost 50/50 (apart from freight) between the proportion of the retail selling price going “North” (Blue) and “South” (Green) respectively' (Ibid.). Another way of phrasing this is that, since the product is completely finished in South Africa, the division of the price paid by the customer is much more evenly spread across global North and South. In simplified terms, the three bottom sections in green shades (i.e. 40.02% + 1.07% + 5.00%) now stay in the global South, whereas in a conventional FLO-Fairtrade situation only the bottom *two* sections in green (1.07% + 5.00%) would have stayed in the South.

Figure 5.2: Turqle's FLO-Value Chain Example

(Source: Turqle 2014e)

Given that Turqle does some of the value-adding itself and takes a cut of the final sales price to pay its wages, the claim that about 50% of the final sales price goes to the South is not completely accurate if we classify Turqle as being in the North. Turqle makes an income primarily by taking a percentage cut of the price of any products they are involved in trading, adding a margin of somewhere between 10-30% of the final retail price. I would therefore argue that, in the hypothetical example given on Turqle's website, it is more accurate to say that somewhere between 16 and 36% of the final retail price stays in the global South. With this caveat, Turqle is certainly making an immense contribution towards counteracting the colonial division of labour in their value chains. Thanks to its involvement, jobs can be created or maintained where otherwise there had been job losses, which is much needed in a country with a youth unemployment rate of over 50% and a general unemployment rate of around 25% – among the very highest in the world (World Bank 2015a, 2015b). Products can be manufactured and finished by companies in the Western Cape who would not otherwise have had that capacity; staff can attend training; and much more.

The prices paid to producer companies is negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and managers of both Luhlaza and Bomvu said they sometimes wished prices were higher, but that forces pushing prices down come from customers, retailers and global market price averages rather than from Turqle. Turqle makes a point out of ensuring a 'fair' price is agreed upon, though many interviewees said, whether staff of Turqle or its suppliers, that everybody in the chain is aware that there are strong market forces pushing prices down and that too high a price means the product will not sell.

As I have argued in previous chapters, however, it is not sufficient to treat the firm as a unit without internal complexities. All of Turqle's suppliers are hierarchically organised capitalist companies, but thanks to Turqle's insistence, they are all paying their staff living wages (or are on a path to doing so). For example, when I asked about the company's wage levels at Bomvu its owner and a member of senior staff expressed that they take pains to pay wages that are above local market levels, especially when it comes to lower tier wages. While the official minimum wage is around 12 rand per hour for the type of work a casual factory floor worker might carry out, Bomvu pays 15 or even 20 rand per hour depending on experience.

Apart from functional and financial upgrading measures, the second main strand of Turqle's prefigurative activities is the Fair Trade Trust. The Trust receives 2.5% of the FOB sale price from Turqle. Some of their European importers, such as the Dutch importer Fair Trade Original and the German importer El Puente, match this donation. On a product selling at £5 per bottle (FOB), the Trust thus receives up to 25 pence per item. This money goes into one single pot and is spent on training and qualifications for the staff of the producer companies, as well as school fees for the workers' children (Turqle 2014b). The Trust has decided to focus on education and training for the time being because those were perceived to be the most needed areas and the most effective ways of providing long-term improvement.

The workers submit applications to the Trust, who then decide whether to fund those applications. The Trust currently funds three types of training and education:

- Group training workshops at factories, covering topics such as health & safety at work, HIV/AIDS prevention, household budgeting, IT skills, conflict resolution, management, and more.
- Further and higher education, as well as qualifications and licenses, for workers or their children. For example advanced IT skills, accountancy, management, driving licenses.
- School fees for children of workers at Primary and Secondary levels, as well as Matric (roughly equivalent to British A-levels) for workers who have not completed it, or for their children.

(Turqle 2014b)

Almost half of all South African schools, including compulsory primary and secondary schools, charge a tuition fee (South African Government 2015). At the time of my fieldwork the Trust funded all workers' children's fees, but not all to a hundred percent.

School fees vary significantly by region and since some fees are very high the Trust has decided to cap contributions to fees. The exact contribution varies from year to year since the Trust's income is dependent on sales. The Trust decided to prioritise school fees since it is a long term investment in counteracting the educational divisions mentioned in the previous section.

The Trust similarly pays for reasonable higher and further education fees for its staff should anybody put in an application, though this is rare. More frequent are applications for driving licences and professional qualifications and accreditations.

The at-work group training for staff is subcontracted to the NGO Philani, an organisation that specialises on providing training, mentoring and support for people in the Western Cape region (Philani 2014). Philani runs many different development projects, most of which focus on increasing the health, economic wellbeing and empowerment of mothers and children. Turqle's Fair Trade Trust is only one of its clients. The workshops that Philani run benefit either the workplace (for example training all staff in fire safety at work; teaching staff how to comply with national and international food safety standards; working on conflict resolution and communication skills in the workplace; etc) or the workers individually (HIV/AIDS awareness as well as testing and medication; household budgeting; literacy; etc).

It is Philani who designs as well as delivers the courses that the Trust offers. The process starts with a member of Philani visiting a factory and speaking to its workers before determining what training sessions to deliver there. The Philani staff member will speak to workers, as well as factory management and Turqle, and decide which courses are most appropriate. I asked workers at Bomvu and Luhlaza about how they perceive their influence over what training Turqle and its Trust offers them. Some staff told me Turqle's training always exceeded their expectations and that they had never felt the need to ask Turqle to do anything differently, or to have a greater say in the activities of the Trust. Other staff told me that they and others do occasionally make specific requests for training and other opportunities that Turqle have not offered, which are often granted, but that most workers never express their views on what training or opportunities they want. A factory floor team leader at Bomvu told me that workers do have preferences but that they rarely express them:

> Bomvu worker 1: Yeah of course we do get requests. […]There's a whole lot of things they want to do but sometimes people are just scared to ask, you know. […]
> Sofa: Why do you think people don't ask?
> Bomvu worker 1: Oh some people are just plain scared, some people just don't wanna

> ask. I was like that before, I didn't ask, I didn't want to… I was rude, I was like, the world owes me something, you know. […] I just thought 'ugh, I'll just come in to work and I'm gonna work and that's all I'm gonna do, and then I'll go home'.
> (Author interview 10 Sept 2013)

Another Bomvu worker expressed a similar perspective:

> Bomvu worker 2: The workers don't ask for training. [It's Turqle who] come to us and say on this date we're gonna run that course. [...]
> Sofa: I've been hearing some people saying that some workers are just not interested in training. [...] I'm trying to ask as many people as possible why this might be.
> Bomvu worker 2: I think maybe they don't understand it very well. That's my concern about some courses. Some people sit among themselves or sit and sleep, and they don't ask questions – they are scared to ask questions or to say something [in a group]. And me too – in the early stages I didn't ask very much and I didn't talk, but the more courses you do, the more you feel like you can take part and ask questions and talk to the trainer.
> (Author interview 10 Sept 2013)

A worker at Luhlaza said most staff are not as interested in training as they should be:

> Sofa: [D]o you think that the [other staff] have [the same positive attitude to training] as [you]?
> Luhlaza worker 1: No, they don't want to learn. [..] The young people are like 'I don't care'. It's a job, at the end of the week I will get my pay, and so it goes on. And they are also going on training and a few weeks after the training they've quit their job. […] You teach someone things and once they've learnt, two or three months later they decide not to come to work anymore. Then you have to teach somebody else. So we repeat the process [constantly]. […] It's not just here, it's all over.
> (Author interview 12 Sept 2013)

The running of the Trust is formally concentrated in the hands of Turqle and the two other individuals who sit on the Trust's Board of Trustees who are not staff of the suppliers (one is an independent consultant and the other is a member of the organisation that the Trust subcontracts to deliver the training courses – the third member of the Board is Pieter from Turqle (Turqle 2014b)). I will return to issues around Trust governance and participation in decision-making below.

The final main prefigurative tactic by Turqle is to use and encourage others to use egalitarian business forms. Turqle is an egalitarian collective of four specialists who have authority over their own areas. Turqle is a company of similar size as Café Libertad, but its organisational philosophy differs in that Turqle's members are given a higher degree

of autonomy over their own departments. As we saw above, Café Libertad works with a shared model in which staff are instead encouraged to rotate between tasks and take part in decision-making on all areas together. One central difficulty in making decisions together comes with balancing inclusivity with leadership. That Turqle gives more autonomy to its members means this is less of a balancing act on a daily basis. Where decisions fit neatly into one of Turqle's defined roles – which many but not all decisions do – each person takes leadership in their own area. If we were to look for any 'invisible' hierarchies here, therefore, the focus would not be on different *individuals* but on different *roles*. For example, one might argue that the role of 'strategy', i.e. strategic planning of how Turqle should develop and seek future income and output (which is part of Rain's portfolio, see previous chapter) is a more politically influential role than for example 'logistics', i.e. the practicalities of shipping, deliveries, etc (which is part of Pieter's portfolio). However, Turqle staff are responsible for more than one area per person, having a mixed portfolio of responsibilities. For example, Rain deals with label design and printing as well as strategy, and Pieter deals with finance and the Fair Trade Trust as well as logistics. Each member of staff's job is a complex of both more and less politically influential roles – added to the fact that all roles have both more and less politically influential aspects to them. Wherever decisions overlap across roles and responsibilities, meetings are held between all relevant members and consensus is sought. Here there is a potential that informal hierarchies might form, and the balancing act between inclusivity and leadership begins.

When it comes to its supplier companies, Pieter stated in an interview that Turqle would ideally work with non-hierarchically organised suppliers such as co-operatives, but that such companies are very rare, and that the reality for most South African workers is to take employment in a traditional capitalist company. Due to widespread assumptions about the necessity of profit, exploitation and competition, the non-capitalist business movement has not found a wide spread in the region at this stage. Therefore Turqle has agreed to work with hierarchically organised and exploitative supplier companies, with a view to work against such hierarchies and exploitation in the longer term. I will outline Bomvu and Luhlaza's governance structures in the subsequent section.

Turqle has a requirement on all their suppliers that their staff must have access to some formal line of influence in the company, whether through being members of a workers' union or through having a workers' committee, i.e. an organisational body through which workers can have a say on wages and working conditions. Luhlaza and Bomvu staff told me that they hold both formal and informal meetings among workers and that worker representatives meet regularly with company managers and owners. If workers have any grievances, large or small, they can discuss them in those meetings. The extent

to which workers have genuine influence over decisions and hold any real bargaining power, however, is difficult to ascertain without an in-depth study focusing on that question. I will return to Bomvu and Luhlaza's entanglement in the capitalist business form in the next section.

To summarise this section, Turqle's support of functional, process and product upgrade, the Trust's activities and Turqle's prefiguring of egalitarian governance structures could be understood as its main prefigurative responses to the colonial matrix. The first two measures address the colonial division of labour head on, equipping firms and workers in the global South to carry out higher value-added labour. Since women and men are equally encouraged to take part in Trust education and training courses, this could also be seen as a disentanglement of patriarchal gender roles – though to a limited extent, especially for workers at Bomvu where gendered divisions of labour still remain, as we will see in the following section. The same is true of race – though racial divisions in society at large play a particularly significant role in determining a person's educational levels, literacy levels and experience of school, which gives different workers different levels of access to the training. The third measure, egalitarian organisation within Turqle, means capitalist organisational features are not deployed there, though as we will see in the next section, significant limitations remain in Bomvu and Luhlaza's internal organisational structures as well as in the governance of the Trust. Turqle would prefer to work with co-operatives, but has agreed to work with Bomvu and Luhlaza even though they are both capitalist companies. Turqle demands that all of its suppliers pay a living wage – or if this is not possible, then make and implement credible plans for doing so – and that workers have some form of representation in the company. These are perceived as necessary compromises in a region where virtually no worker-owned companies exist.

5-3. ENTANGLEMENTS

While Turqle's activities disentangle the colonial matrix in several key respects, colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism live on in many other ways. In this section I will outline some of the main entanglements that remain.

The kinds of inequalities and divisions that Turqle are seeking to challenge are both strong and widespread. The global division of labour, the racial-classed-gendered divisions in South African society, the Eurocentrism of the dominant development discourse – these are challenges that one prefigurative trading company cannot simply end overnight. What is important to understand, however, is that prefiguration is not a

tactic designed to even attempt to do so. Turqle's prefigurative trading is not a tactic designed to change everybody's lives in all of South Africa, or even all of the Western Cape in a direct manner – rather, the aim of this particular activity is to change the situation for its participating individuals and to inspire and inform others to seek similar change for themselves, or to join and expand Turqle's projects. (Turqle also engages in 'politics of demand', which does have the aim of seeking policy and institutional change on a governmental and international level.) Some critics of prefigurative politics see its lack of intention to liberate all of the working class as an abandonment of class solidarity (Sharzer 2012), or as a resignation to the fact that radicals simply 'can't win' (Thompson 2006). The retort from prefiguravists is that such critiques misinterpret the aims of prefiguravism, and that the ontological interpretation of power that underlies it does not allow for liberation of others on their behalf: such a liberation would be non-radical, hierarchical and paternalistic. I will return to this debate in the next chapter.

Noting that these broader social divisions lie outside the remit of Turqle's prefigurative trading, we have also started to see the importance of understanding how they limit and shape Turqle's activities.

Let us look at the effects of Apartheid as a case in point. The 1953 Bantu Education Act was one infamous Apartheid law that formalised racial segregation, funnelling black people through an educational route designed to train them as manual labourers, while white people had access to more analytical, advanced and well-funded education (Kallaway 2002). This history still affects Turqle's work with factory staff as many of the latter find engaging in training courses and upgrading opportunities difficult:

> [B]ecause of the Apartheid legacy, many people had to leave school at the age of 10 or 12 or 15, and as well, black education and coloured education at the time was very rudimentary. It was a totally different thing from white education. So many of those people are basically functionally illiterate. They can read the basics and do the basic calculations, but nothing further. […] So, for many of the [factory staff] there is not much that we *can* do.
> (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013)

The Bantu Education Act has formally been repealed but divisions along racial lines continue, with education and income levels remaining significantly lower for the black and coloured than for the white population, and with high quality and advanced education remaining far more accessible for the latter group (Branson et al 2012; Crankshaw 2012).

Like the education system, South Africa's welfare system leaves much to be desired, though everyone in need is able to apply for financial benefits from the government, such as housing benefit, childcare benefits, etc. These payments are meagre and not always enough to live on, but the government spends a proportionately large share of the GDP on them (IRIN 2011, Economist 2000). To counteract this, Turqle insists on paying workers a living wage, though there are limits to how well slightly higher wages can compensate for the lack of a decent welfare system. When I interviewed the manager at Bomvu, it became clear that Bomvu's management are finding themselves attempting to cover some of the gaps in the welfare system through their own voluntary, and ultimately unqualified, efforts. One Bomvu manager described having supported staff through addiction problems, mental health crises, with anger management problems and self-esteem issues:

> Sofa: Some of the things you've been telling me about, some of the problems you face, in Britain the government would have done something about it – if someone had anger management issues there would be a social worker there, or the government would pay for them to go to training [...].
> Bomvu manager: The problem with our government is that the people who have the ability to fix these social problems, they are the corrupt ones. [...] But those people [disadvantaged people] in those circumstances [living in townships and lacking support]... I don't know, maybe it's the way that they were brought up, or they don't... Um... I don't know what words to use. [...] Maybe they don't know any better, I can't even say.
> (Author interview 10 Sept 2013)

This interview quote and the previous one present an image of Bomvu and Luhlaza's factory workers as disadvantaged through living with bad educational backgrounds and bad socio-economic conditions. Neither the welfare state nor the workplace can provide sufficient support for workers' needs. This image is corroborated in principle by the national inequality and poverty statistics quoted above, as well as in interview statements by one of the Bomvu workers (Bomvu Worker 1 in interview 10 Sept 2013) who opted to discuss this issue unprompted. Turqle and the Trust can counteract some of these divisions by offering education, training and better pay and employment opportunities, though these measures cannot make all inequalities disappear. I will outline some of the main ways in which colonial/racist, patriarchal and capitalist divisions live on in the practices and organisation of the firms in this case study. Sometimes broader social divisions affect these actors indirectly, but in other respects the organisational forms and practices of Bomvu and Luhlaza actively and directly reproduce them.

In South Africa there are language- and cultural differences that tend to cluster along 'ethnic' lines: in the region around Cape Town, most black people speak Xhosa, most coloured people speak Afrikaans, and most white people speak English as well as Afrikaans. These groupings are very pronounced and intimately linked to cultural identities, meaning not only that different ethnicities speak different languages, but also that there are stereotypes in the media and daily parlance about what people belonging to these different ethnic groups are like (Durrheim et al 2011). Infamously, these identities are organised in an intricate social hierarchy that was explicitly formal under Apartheid, whereby whites were and are the most highly regarded, privileged, respected and oppressive group; blacks the least highly regarded and privileged, most suspected and oppressed; and coloureds somewhere in between in an intricate system of categories (Ibid.). As we saw above, white people are many times more likely than people of colour to have gone to higher education or private school and to have grown up in an environment where others were highly educated and skilled (Statistics South Africa 2014). Added to this, white people are most likely to speak both Afrikaans and English, which most higher-tier jobs require. Afrikaans and English are colonial languages, and norms around what constitutes eloquence in both languages have developed with white bourgeois culture as the benchmark. With all this in mind, it is no coincidence that the staff of Turqle and the owners and most top-tier staff at Bomvu and Luhlaza are white, while most (but not all) of their factory workers are people of colour, even if their organisational structures do not purposely privilege white people.

Racial divisions intersect with gendered ones. On a country aggregate level, South Africa has enormous behavioural and economic divisions along gender lines. For example, most single parents in South Africa are women – indeed, the most common type of family in South Africa is a single mother household – meaning that women spend more time, money and career-opportunities on children than men do (Holborn and Eddy/SAIRR 2011: 1, 3). This is especially true for women of colour, who are far more likely to be single mothers than white women (Ibid.). To the extent that aggregated national-level data from IGOs is informative, South Africa ranks only as 94th best country for 'gender equality' (a measure of equality in 'reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market') in the United Nation's Human Development Report 2013 (UNDP 2013: Table 4, p.156), meaning that women are likely to face greater challenges in life than men.

Turqle and Luhlaza have made conscious efforts to transcend gender divisions within their companies. Out of Turqle's four staff three are women, but gender does not noticeably influence their work or behaviour on an individual level. Turqle as a company has managed to disentangle androcentrism within its own organisation by rejecting the macho-capitalist norms that are so prevalent in the world of business in the global

North, of competition, accumulation, authority and aggression – a rejection expressed both in its status as a non-profit company, in its social aims, and in its organisational culture. Luhlaza, meanwhile, was set up as a project to provide employment for women who at the time experienced particularly difficult unemployment in the local region, so women were originally over-represented in the company's workforce, though a greater proportion of men have been employed over the years. Here androcentrism is not quite as disentangled – especially as traditional capitalist organisational models and economic assumptions around profit and competition model the company – but conscious efforts have been made to counteract more overt gender inequalities.

Bomvu has considerably more palpable gender and racial divisions than either Luhlaza or Turqle. Though it is emphatically not the case that people belonging to different gender or racial categories are paid different wages for the same job, such categories are key in the designation of job roles. When I visited the factory in 2013, a small group of black men did the driving for the company; a larger group of coloured men did certain parts of the manufacturing process that involved heavy lifting and the use of heavy machinery; black and coloured women, and one white woman, did other parts of the manufacturing process including sorting, packaging and labelling; and *mainly* white men and women, but also men and women of colour, did the admin and management work on the first floor above the factory. The racial divisions of labour are thus not absolute, and not without exception. Gendered divisions are more definite in certain parts of the company: packing and labelling are only carried out by women, while driving and loading is only done by men. For any member of the workforce, thus, race and gender largely determine their job role. On the factory floor, this division of roles has a limited influence on differences in individuals' financial remuneration since most factory floor jobs are paid similar wages. Notably, however, higher-tier roles in the company such as admin, strategy, marketing and higher-level management have gone almost exclusively to white people, whether men and women.

Both Luhlaza and Bomvu are straightforwardly capitalist companies with ensuing organisational hierarchies and class positions. In both cases a few individuals or a group of shareholders own the company get all its profits if there are any, and make all the major decisions about the company. The labourers who are employed by the company do not take part in its ownership or profits. The labourers are hierarchically organised, separating between managers, admin staff, manual workers, etc. These roles are significantly different both when it comes to wages and empowering job tasks.

Bomvu is wholly owned by a family who also manage the company, and who founded it at its inception, creating a source of income and employment that did not previously

exist. This family makes all major decisions, oversees the work of senior management, and receives any profits made. As such this family is in an entirely different position from everybody else in the company – their financial gain has no upper limit and is wholly derived from the surplus created by the workers' labour, including the labour they do themselves as part-time senior managers. Every other worker in the company has an income limited to a set salary, whether annual or hourly, and will never have final say in any decisions about the business.

Bomvu's company structure can be summarised as presented in Figure 5.3. The owners receive the most money and are most empowered; below them are the senior managers who are employed but who have a relatively high wage and level of influence over the company. Below them are office-based staff who carry out administrative tasks in finance, human resources, sales, etc, that can be classified as mid-level skilled and waged. Below them are the factory floor managers, who work in manual jobs on the factory floor but who also oversee and manage the work of the other manual labourers and who are paid a higher wage than them. Finally are the manual workers. Most of these workers have permanent contracts that provide guaranteed employment hours, sick leave, maternity leave, paid training etc. Some of them, however, are employed on a casual basis and paid by the hour when extra staff is needed.

Figure 5.3: Staff Structure at Bomvu

Owners
Senior managers
Office and admin staff
Factory floor managers
Factory floor workers, permanent
Factory floor workers, casual

Luhlaza resembles Bomvu in many respects. The company structure is roughly similar, with a family owning the company whilst simultaneously managing it. The structure in Figure 5.3 is roughly applicable to Luhlaza, though the ratio of management and admin staff to factory floor workers is much lower, i.e. there are proportionally more factory workers. Wages in this company are similarly above going market rates, though one co-owner/manager explained to me that the company is facing difficult times financially and are not able to offer as high wages as they would like to:

> 'We grew considerably til about 2007, since then it became very difficult for us. […] We've absolutely cut our costs to the bone. We live very frugally – as far as possible we buy everything second hand and in cash. But the past four or five years have been truly horrible.'
> (Luhlaza manager in interview 12 Sept 2013)

As we saw above, at Turqle's insistence, Bomvu and Luhlaza have worker's committees through which workers can air any grievances or make suggestions for improvements in the workplace. Even with formal avenues, however, it can be difficult for workers to make their voices heard given the openly hierarchical nature of these businesses. I asked Pieter at Turqle about this in an interview:

> Sofa: How do you know whether a company is living up to [principles protecting workers' rights]? For example, with workers' committees, how do you know whether it's just a formal thing or whether it's actually working?
> Pieter: We do annual audits on them. [...] So then we would want to see minutes of workers' committee meetings with management. […] [I]t has to be a democratically elected workers' committee […]. We, through the Trust, pay for the training of the workers […] so they know what are their responsibilities, what are their rights, and how to conduct meetings, why you have to have minutes. […] Some of them have worked, others have not. […] Even twenty years later [after the formal end of apartheid] there is still... If I'm white, you black, therefore I assume that I have certain rights and you don't – or, it's seen that if the white guy says this then I [as a person of colour] can't argue because... And to get over that I think there's still a lot of work to be done [...].
> (Author interview 11 Sept 2013)

There are thus both external hierarchies that seep into Turqle's and their suppliers' prefigurative organisational structures (expectations, assumptions, norms), and internal ones stemming from the make-up of the structures themselves (though there are worker's committees, the capitalist lines of command in Figure 5.3 are all too real).

Though Turqle places requirements on its supplier companies to provide spaces for workers to make their voices heard, ironically, Turqle does not have such a platform for workers to take part in decision-making in the Fair Trade Trust. As mentioned above, the Trust is governed by a Board consisting of three individuals, none of whom are workers. This irony is by no means lost on Turqle. Rain and Pieter told me that worker participation in the Trust's decision-making is something they have struggled with:

> Rain: [T]he critics come from organisations, like the FLO people, like some of the auditors

and those people. They say, you should have [workers'] representation on the Trust. Then you go to the factories and you say to the guys: guys are you interested? And they all sit there and go... [feigns disinterested stare].

Pieter: For us it's also a practical thing. If we are going to spend 20,000 rand to get everybody together once a quarter to have a Trust meeting, cause you have to bring them here [to central Cape Town], and that requires accommodation, because some of them are from quite far away. What is better – to spend that 20,000 on that or to spend it on programmes that will give a greater long term benefit?

Rain: And the scope of the Trust is quite narrow. It really is educational, it's not a case of having to decide where the funds are going to be spent. The decisions are very simple: it depends on how much money there is, what proportion of the school fees are being paid, and what is left over for other educational things. That's it. So it isn't as if there's huge ideological discussions or whatever that people need to feed into. And through the process that the service delivery people [i.e. Philani, the company that delivers training to Turqle's suppliers] conduct every second year [at each supplier company], they do a needs assessment, they go out there and actually go and chat to the factories, because the needs are quite diverse.

[…]

Pieter: Yes, we do get criticism because there's not sufficient, or workers' representation [on the Trust's Board]. And it's something we will continue to grapple with. Cause, how do you do it *practically*? For instance […] most of your urban people are, and this is reality, are far more... [Rain: sophisticated] sophisticated, street savvy... whatever, than your rural people. So if you say 'right, we'll bring them all together and let them make the decisions', your urban people are gonna be far stronger and their needs are gonna be far more dominant than those that are less sophisticated or... intimidated or whatever else. (Author interview 3 Sept 2013)

Thus, the Trust does not have factory workers' representation on its Board due to a mix of practical difficulties (cost, levels of 'sophistication') and ideological ones (Turqle wants to spend the money on children's school fees in the first instance, workers appear disinterested in attending Board meetings).

The question of decision-making in the Trust opens up a broader conundrum that Turqle encounters in its disentanglement work. Disentangling the matrix of power involves empowering those who are normally less empowered. The conundrum is: how does one empower somebody other than oneself? This is a classic problem in the world of Participatory Development, social work and other industries and literatures working for empowerment of the oppressed. For example, Giles Mohan argues that development projects that are supposed to be participant-led often serve merely to hide the influence

of powerful people:

> This raises questions about whether a powerful person 'giving' power to an apparently powerless group constitutes empowerment or whether it reinforces the power of the development agent and deepens the dependency of the beneficiaries.
> (Mohan 2007: 783)

Instead of being empowered by others, marginalised groups must speak for themselves and 'exercise their political voice' (Ibid. p. 794). (Bearing in mind that voice, as we have seen, does not always take explicit or immediately visible expressions – see Scott 1985). Towards this aim, then, there are some measures Turqle can take that would be helpful. For example, paying factory staff higher wages and providing better working conditions is one positive step towards helping them to make their own voices heard. Providing training that teaches critical thinking tools and literacy is another. Turqle are offering both of these things. These measures have not, however, appeared to translate into a situation where the workers are taking charge of their own political expression (through making political demands or organising themselves) – at least not yet.

What is even more problematic is that, where Turqle has been able to ask workers for their views on what the Trust should offer, the workers have given answers that, to Turqle's ears, do not sound like the right ones.

> Rain: And every single time you have the meetings you *always* start from scratch to explain... For arguments' sake, with [Bomvu], each time a workers' committee meets it always comes back with the same thing, they want help to repay their debts, they want DSTV [satellite TV], they want this and that.
> Pieter: And housing... And again that's not something that's in the ambit of this trust – I'd love it if we had enough money to buy a house for people. But it's not here to pay people's debt or luxuries or whatever else.
> Rain: Or DSTV or whatever. So then they usually... Once they've put all that on the table, then that's fine, then they usually work back from there and they say, okay fine, the purpose of the Trust is for education […].
> […]
> Rain: I had a conversation with someone recently. […] And I said to the guy: you're asking for trees. But we need to be looking for lawn. [...] Because if we were coming from a European perspective, as people from Europe, you'd say fine it's been ten years of a particular kind of intervention – we want to see a concrete monument to that input. But it doesn't work like that. It's a slow seeping process of, I would almost call it trickle irrigation. And yes, I can see that people would be wanting to look for trees, but unfortunately there are no trees, we've just got lawn.
> (Author interview 3 Sept 2013)

When asked, workers say they want the money to be spent on things Turqle does not perceive as effective long term investments. Workers want satellite TV, luxury consumer goods, personal debt repayments (which may only open the door for new debts in the future) and better personal housing. Turqle has a low level of trust in the ability of workers to spend money wisely. This lack of trust is largely based on many factory workers' track record of what Turqle perceive as unwise spending. Pieter told me:

> The [workers] think well I'm earning 800 rand per week, as an example, and this TV is 700 rand so I can buy it. But they forget they haven't bought milk or bread. [...] Where people got paid weekly, especially in the rural area, there are massive problems with alcoholism, and drugs as well. We ran a survey a while ago... [...] And what would happen was, they got paid on a Friday afternoon. And either themselves, or in many cases if it was a female worker, the husband, would take the money and go and get drunk and there was no money left for food. So we changed it so the money goes out on a monthly basis. It goes out to a bank account, and it goes out on a Saturday afternoon, so the liquor stores are legally closed, and they have to go to the ATM to withdraw it, and the woman can set a limit to how much you can withdraw per day, to limit their husbands taking the money. (Pieter in interview 11 Sept 2013)

To help workers think more critically about how they spend their money, the Trust runs occasional workplace training courses in household budgeting. One worker told me:

> We did [a workshop] recently about how to do your budget and stuff. [...] Sometimes people don't know how to do their [personal household] budget. Say I [have a shopping list] when I go to the shop. But sometimes you add things that are not on the list and you go way over your budget. But if you work backwards from your budget then you know how to spend your money. [...] It's hard for our people[2] to save money. We want to buy lots of crap. [laughs] When you go to the shop and you buy your things, you say 'oh I want that chocolate though it's not on my list', and you come to the till and say 'ohh I don't have enough money', but the chocolate is the last thing you want to put back [laughs]. (Bomvu worker 1 in interview 10 Sept 2013)

The dilemma of (dis)entanglement is intricate. Turqle wants to empower factory workers, but the workers are not interested in participating in the decision-making

[2] This interviewee appeared to identify Bomvu's factory workers as a distinct group, separate from the management and admin team at the firm, frequently using terms such as 'we' and 'our people'. It is difficult to tell whether this implied that the company's factory floor workers have a strong sense of group identity among themselves, or whether it referred to the group identification that Bomvu's managers, Turqle and this research project impose on those workers. It is also possible that racial and class politics figure in this identification: 'our people' might refer to working class people of colour more generally.

channels Turqle can offer. Reasons for this might include that workers do not feel ownership of those decision-making channels, do not see the point of them, or are not aware or convinced that political organisation can affect real change. Hirschman's argument (1970: 77) that agents tend to choose exit rather than voice when they deem the likelihood of being listened to as low, appears to apply here. We could also interpret the disinterest in attending Trust meetings, reported by Rain above, as a form of 'everyday resistance' (Scott 1985). This is not necessarily to imply that Bomvu and Luhlaza workers, or anybody else, are consistently rational actors who calculate the cost and benefit of their actions. The non-participation in Trust decision-making and the apathy around training expressed by workers above, are not necessarily acts in resistance to Turqle specifically, or a result of feeling unlistened-to by its individual staff. The target of this resistance may be bourgeois or white elites in general, the global North, or social inequality more broadly. What is notable, however, is that Turqle staff in interviews expressed preconceived ideas regarding correct requests and behaviour by workers.

When they do speak out, workers ask for what Turqle perceive to be the wrong things. Turqle are fully aware of this problematic but do not know how to overcome it in the short term. They perceive the possible solutions as too costly or too problematic, especially in the light of the dire unemployment and poverty rates in the region. Turqle offer the workers occasional training in household budgeting as well as admin skills, though this training has not appeared to have increased the workers' participation in the running of the Trust thus far.

One response to this dilemma might be to argue that it is unreasonable of Turqle to assume that there are 'right' and 'wrong' answers to the question of what workers should want. After all, I have been arguing in this thesis that value is a site of political struggle – not a scientific process of unveiling universal truth. Surely, then, if workers ask for satellite TV and better housing, those are the things the Trust should spend its money on? This response has merit, but it overlooks the benefit of education in critical thinking and deliberation. Oftentimes oppression and marginalisation involve being excluded from resources, securities and experiences that enable a person to make good long-term decisions. Making strategically sound decisions about the future requires certain knowledge about society, economics and psychology, which we are not born with but must learn, and our external conditions must not prevent us from deliberating carefully and critically. This argument can be linked to what marxists often call 'false consciousness', or the 'third dimension of power' (Lukes 2005). The persuasive voices in this debate straddle the middle ground between two equally unpalatable yet compelling ideas: on the one hand, the idea that social scientists can unveil superficially unapparent

power relations that affect the thoughts of oppressed groups against their will or awareness; and on the other, the idea that there is no neutral arbiter who can describe reality or prescribe behaviours to oppressed groups without political bias (see e.g. Holloway 2002; Mignolo 2011).

Though we cannot predefine which answers to the question of value are right or wrong, we can predict with some degree of certainty which kinds of actions are more likely to lead to particular outcomes in certain situations. For example, spending money on my children's school fees is, with a high degree of certainty, more likely to place my children in a better financial situation in the future than had I spent the money on alcohol for my own consumption today. To argue that value is a political question rather than a scientific one, thus, is not to deny that scientific methods such as reasoning and observation can contribute to informing a good decision in certain situations. To be clear, my argument here is not that scientific methods such as reasoning and critical thinking can tell us which is the *right* course of action, but that they can help us predict *which is the likely outcome* of a given course of action. (This is not to say that people using such scientific methods are free of bias or cannot be questioned).

The aim in disentangling the colonial matrix is to counteract oppression and marginalisation, but what this example shows is that there exists an open question of whether the best way to do so is to make all development projects participant-led in the here and now. In other words, a question exists as to what aspect of the desired future one should prefigure today. If the prefigurativist wants everyone to be empowered, does that necessarily mean they must treat everyone as if they were already empowered? Or to phrase the question differently: must disentanglement be free of continued entanglement? (As should be clear by now, my answer is no.)

A second response to Turqle's dilemma might be to argue that it is unreasonable of Turqle to expect factory workers to be interested in participating in an organisation set up by an external actor, and operating with pre-defined aims. How attractive is it really for a factory worker to dedicate time and energy to participating in a project that some external and elite group has organised? Rather than interpreting the workers' 'wrong' answers as an inability on their part to know what is best for them, we might interpret them as a dismissal and a rejection of the arguably patronising invitation to be helped or saved by an external elite group – as everyday forms of resistance (Scott 1985).

As Participatory Development scholar Giles Mohan points out, genuinely inclusive participatory projects (which he calls 'claimed' rather than 'invited', Mohan 2014: 132-3) require more than merely inviting participants to sit in on meetings. Rather, participants

must design the entire agenda, set the basic aims and strategies of the project. For Café Libertad in the previous chapter this dilemma never arose since the Zapatistas have organised their own institutions and set their own aims. For Turqle, however, the situation is different. How can Turqle invite people to form their own institutions and set their own aims who are not interested in doing so? As many scholars emphasise, empowerment is not something one person can give to somebody else – it needs to be a process led by the person being empowered (Lee 2001: 33; Mohan 2007).

Unlike the Zapatistas, the people who work for Turqle's suppliers have not identified themselves as a group, but have been defined as a group by other people. As employees of each supplier company, these individuals have merely sought paid employment, not membership of an intentional community beyond that. As participants in Turqle's training programmes and upgrading initiatives, these individuals only form a group in the minds of Turqle, and of us who are thinking about this PhD thesis. These workers do not identify as a group, do not necessarily share opinions or interests, and have never met or spoken to each other across firms. This means that the infrastructure for having workers' voices heard, whether internally in the firm or to others outside it, has not been designed by workers themselves. For Bomvu and Luhlaza, as capitalist companies, this is no conundrum since hierarchical firms have few aspirations to egalitarian decision-making. For Turqle, however, the fact that they themselves rather than the workers have taken the initiative to form the Fair Trade Trust is problematic.

The Trust thus encounters two fundamental problems: how to distinguish between Eurocentrism and well-informed action, and how to empower the workers to take charge of the Trust themselves. With regards to the first issue, I am arguing that an open question exists as to which aspects of their desired future prefigurativists should prefigure in the here and now. There are comprehensible reasons why Turqle has not given over decision-making of the Trust to the workers at this stage. Instead it offers workplace training along with minimal participation opportunities, with an aim to include workers more comprehensively at some point in the future. This is not necessarily to say, however, that Turqle has done everything it can, or should, to shift empowerment to the workers.

While what I have called scientific methods (reason, critical thinking, empirical evidence, etc) help in predicting the likely outcomes of any given action, these scientific methods are highly dependent on political bias and are likely to render different results through different people's minds; and furthermore, they cannot determine which outcomes are desirable. One might argue that it would be appropriate for Turqle to open a debate about their preconceived desired outcomes and take workers' requests more seriously –

perhaps by spending half of the budget on satellite TV and the other half on education. Such a solution may be educational for both the workers and for Turqle, and may increase workers' interests in engaging in further Fair Trade Trust decision-making.

5-4. CONCLUSION

Though Turqle, Bomvu and Luhlaza are geographically proximate, they are vastly differently situated in the colonial matrix of power. Turqle is a more internally homogenous organisation made up of four highly educated, Westernised white people in decently paid employment. The owners and top-tier managers of Luhlaza and Bomvu are similarly privileged, while the workers face racial, classed and gendered obstacles. The colonial/racial axis of the matrix places most people in South Africa in a peripheral economic situation, having little influence over global economic politics and capturing little value-added. Overwhelmingly it is people of colour who hold the least lucrative and influential positions in the world of industry. To counteract this trend, Turqle facilitates economic and social upgrade in their supplier companies, and trains and educates workers and their children. Starting with a few small-scale companies producing bulk or raw materials for the local market in the late 1990s, Turqle today supports around 15 companies in exporting shelf-ready products to Europe and Australia. About 500 workers are able to receive training through the Fair Trade Trust and around 150 children's school fees are paid each year.

Unlike Café Libertad, Turqle does not work with producers who have organised their own political institutions or who broadcast their own political messages; the Western Cape region do not have an equivalent of the Zapatistas. In seeking to empower their suppliers' workers – or disentangle the colonial matrix of power – Turqle must therefore come up with alternative strategies. Turqle has made the assessment that the best way to subvert the colonial matrix is to help construct a better foundation for the workers to stand on. As Rain put it above, 'I can see that people would be wanting to look for trees, but unfortunately there are no trees, we've just got lawn' (author interview 3 Sept 2013). That is to say, even though Turqle could be interpreted as a prefigurative organisation, there is the notion of incremental or gradated change: lawn (better working conditions, better wages, higher skilled workers, better educated children) comes before trees (a politically assertive and organised class of workers).

Accordingly, Turqle utilises the more commonly accepted understanding of value – value as more profit to the company owners and more money as well as non-monetary benefits to the workers. Turqle measures its own success by jobs created, products sold,

value-added captured, wages raised, workers and children educated. Underlying these indicators are the conventional Western-capitalist assumptions about the meaning of value and the good life: to be competitive, to be lucrative, to advance, to accumulate wealth. This acceptance of conventional conceptions of value is far from unreflected. The staff of Turqle are highly aware of the problematic and limited nature of their own work. They have made the assessment that functional upgrade and improved wages and working conditions are the most beneficial changes in the here and now. As Pieter put it in an interview: 'if you're not putting food on people's tables, all the theory [decolonial, political, etc] is worth nothing'.

This viewpoint could perhaps be interpreted as the idea that there is in some sense a pyramid of value upgrade, similar to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. In Maslow's hierarchy, some human needs are more fundamental than others – for example, food, water, safety and loving relationships are more fundamental than the need for intellectual stimulation, self-esteem or self-actualisation (Maslow 1943). Somebody lacking access to both food and self-actualisation, Maslow argues, will generally seek the former before the latter. More recent scholars have continued to develop a framework for universal human needs: for example, Doyal and Gough list twelve 'intermediate needs' which include not only food and housing but also economic security and basic education among other things (1991); Martha Nussbaum lists ten 'human goods' that are similarly both material and cultural (2002).

However, though it is difficult to deny that all humans need food, water, security, etc, decolonial scholars would point out that the ways in which we conceive of these needs and how we organise their satisfaction is heavily influenced by cultural values and practices (Escobar 2007: 23-24). That people in the Western Cape, for example, have low incomes and lack decent food does not automatically mean that further implication into global value chains is universally the correct remedy. Furthermore, as Escobar points out, many social movements in the global South through which people who lack basic material needs are expressing their views, are struggling for needs that are not material: 'cultural rights and identities, alternative economies (not dedicated to accumulation) and so forth' (Ibid.). Indeed, the Zapatistas is a good example of this: though many Zapatistas lack food and land, they spend hours every month in political meetings discussing ideology and political procedure.

Negotiating its ultimate aims, its resources, its skills and its interpretation of the world, Turqle has decided to focus on economic and social upgrade in the short term, and better education of children in the longer term. We do not know whether, for example, the workers of Turqle's suppliers would have made the same call had they been the founders

of the organisation. Whereas the Zapatistas and Café Libertad's dialogues about value suffer from disorganisation and a case of the two actors talking over each other, Turqle finds itself with no representative to speak to at the other end of the line. Although workers formally have the ability to make their voices heard in workers' committees, in daily conversations with their managers, in emails to Turqle, during factory visits by the training provider Philani for periodical audits, or during occasional visits by Turqle staff, the conditions do not appear to be conducive to dialogue. Workers do not feel ownership over the process, are not interested, ask for what Turqle perceives to be the 'wrong' things.

I argued in the previous chapter that upgrade is not only about providing Southern producers with more money but 'also about improving the abilities of all involved actors to speak and listen about values' through organisational infrastructures developed for this purpose. I will discuss this further in chapter 6. This point is even starker in this case study than the previous one. It is especially difficult to foster the expression of other people's voices if those people have not defined themselves as speakers. How can one actor, and a more privileged one, empower another, less privileged, one? Turqle has placed its bets on functional, process and product upgrade, social upgrade and education.

We recognise a classic dilemma in the Development industry. Using the best tools at its disposal, Turqle has attempted to invite factory staff to express their views on value – but lo and behold, the workers do not behave as model participants, they do not play along according to the rules or smile the grateful smiles we see in the brochures of development NGOs and IFIs. Turqle, of course, has been aware of this all along, and it struggles continuously to find the least bad solution. The need to turn to incremental and graduated change and to start with conventional value shows just how entangled Turqle's disentanglement efforts are. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to assume therefore that Turqle's politics are politics of demand.

Having understood the main ways in which these cases are entangled with and disentangle the colonial matrix of power, I dedicate the next two chapters to the most analytically interesting tensions that have emerged, and what those tensions can add to the field of Political Economy.

Chapter 6

Equalising Trade Relations: Upgrade and Value

6-1. INTRODUCTION

The research question at the heart of this thesis – are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides? – has two constituent analytical parts: what measures can and do our case studies take in order to equalise trade relations across colonial divides, and to what extent is their prefigurativism successful? This chapter addresses the first of these two questions, and the next chapter the second. In each of these two chapters I compare and contrast our two case studies in order to draw out some key learning points.

As we will see, the differences between our case study organisations are elucidating. For example, the different types of economic upgrade these organisations focus on bring their own strengths and weaknesses: Turqle's explicit focus on functional, process and product upgrade bears a greater promise of long term financial improvement for their suppliers than the Zapatista – Café Libertad relationship can offer Zapatista coffee farmers, as it focuses on the type of upgrade that Bolwig et al have called 'getting better paid for the same product' (2010: 177). At the same time, Turqle is significantly less able than Café Libertad and the Zapatistas to transcend capitalist exploitation, as Turqle works with capitalist suppliers and aims for social upgrade. Furthermore – and perhaps most crucially for my argument here – the fact that the workers at Turqle's supplier companies have not organised themselves or defined themselves as a group renders democratic decision-making elusive. Even for the Zapatistas and Café Libertad, which to a significant extent are democratically organised internally, dialogues about deeper political issues across organisations are rare and dysfunctional. I will expand on all of these points in the following sections.

This chapter builds upon the previous chapters of this thesis. An understanding of what equalisation of trade relations across colonial divides might look like has already begun to emerge: in chapter 2 I provided an overview of some of the most persuasive theoretical perspectives that have set out to understand and address global economic inequalities. I outlined GVC analysis as the most recent response to the colonial division of labour. In chapters 4 and 5 I introduced the main ways in which the Zapatistas and Café Libertad on the one hand, and Turqle and its suppliers on the other, disentangle and remain entangled in the colonial matrix of power. In chapter 3 I rejected the monologic of economism and instead adopted the heuristic device of the colonial matrix of power,

in which different axes of oppression interact. In this chapter I apply the critique of economism to GVC analysis, with particular focus on its concept of upgrade. GVC analysis originally focused exclusively on economic upgrade, analysing the potential for Southern firms to gain more value-added. In more recent years the notion of social upgrade has been introduced, though I argue in this chapter that this development of GVC's analytical toolbox is too limited. As well as pointing out that the very distinction between economic and social upgrade is predicated upon capitalocentrism, I argue for the introduction of a new concept: voice upgrade. This concept is designed to take into account pluriversal concerns stemming from all three axes of our stylised matrix of power.

In this chapter I discuss these three types of upgrade in turn. Firstly, in order to critically evaluate the notion of economic upgrade, as well as the processes it denotes, I start by discussing the benefits as well as drawbacks – in both cases qualified by caveats – it has brought to our case studies. I argue that economic upgrade is important in counteracting the global division of labour, but that attention must be paid to inequalities and divisions within the firm.

Secondly, in section 6-3. I turn to the process and concept of social upgrade. Social upgrade is needed, I argue, when there is a distinction between the owners of a company (who are thereby the beneficiaries of economic upgrade), and the employees. The need for social upgrade stems directly from the fact that wealth does not automatically 'trickle down' from capitalist elites to workers and the general population, which neoliberal economists have falsely argued (Stiglitz 2002). While social upgrade is a useful concept and policy tool when dealing with capitalist companies, then, it is not applicable to firms that are employee-owned. In an employee-owned firm economic upgrade and social upgrade are directly correlated – even identical – since the workers of a business are its owners. Any economic improvement for the firm thus means an economic improvement for its workers. In democratically organised employee-owned firms, such as co-operatives, the worker-owners decide themselves how to redistribute economic gains and whether to invest in higher wages, shorter hours, better machines, etc. Looking at our case studies we see resulting differences: Turqle, which works with capitalist suppliers, has a range of social upgrade policies in place, which it also evaluates and audits. The Zapatistas, meanwhile, operate through co-operatives and (at least formally) democratic governance, so Café Libertad does not have any social upgrade programmes beyond sending money through the coffee price payment and the solidarity support fund.

I argue, then, that the distinction between economic and social upgrade results from a mismatch between the aims of egalitarian development policies and the aims implicit in

capitalist production. In fact, I argue in section 6-4., the economic cannot be separated from the social. Resulting from this, I finally introduce the concept of 'voice upgrade' and discuss the presence or lack of such a process in the case studies, before concluding. My underlying motivation stems from the rejection of econocentrism and the interpretation of power as resting on several axes: capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy.

6-2. ECONOMIC UPGRADE

GVC analysts have shown that firms in the global periphery are disadvantaged by carrying out tasks in global value chains that are less lucrative than those carried out in the core (e.g. Bair 2009; Daviron and Ponte 2005). Economic upgrade addresses the ways in which Southern firms can counteract this economic inequality. In the first half of this section I will discuss the benefits of economic upgrade, with specific reference to my case studies. In the second half I will critique the concept from a decolonial perspective.

6-2.1 Qualified Benefits

That economic upgrade is beneficial for people in the global South is a contention well-supported, and qualified, by GVC analysts (see e.g. Barrientos et al 2011; Bolwig et al 2011; Humphrey 2004; Ponte and Ewert 2009). GVC analysts define economic upgrade within industrial sectors as 'a move to higher value-added activities in production, to improve technology, knowledge and skills, and to increase the benefits or profits deriving from participation in GPNs [Global Production Networks]' (Barrientos et al 2011: 323). As we saw in chapter 2, the GVC typology usually includes four types of upgrading. (1) Process upgrading refers to an increase in production efficiency and thus a higher yield per invested pound. Examples include the mechanisation of production processes that were previously done by hand, or the substitution of one production process with another that produces less waste (e.g. Trienekens 2011). (2) Product upgrading means shifting to production of more advanced and/or expensive product, for example producing luxury or 'noble' wines instead of cheaper bulk wines (Ponte and Ewert 2009). (3) Functional upgrade is the acquisition of the capability to perform more highly value-added tasks in the chain, for example designing and sewing clothes as well as weaving the cloth (Tokatli 2007). (4) Inter-sectoral upgrading involves moving into new and more lucrative sectors, for example switching from producing cash crops for local sale to producing export crops (Ashraf et al 2009). Bolwig et al add several further types, of which one is of particular relevance here: 'matching standards and certifications, […] getting better paid for the same product (for example, fair trade)' (2010: 177).

It is not the case that these measures have a positive outcome in every instance. For example, where production of local cash crops is replaced by the production of export crops, producers become more vulnerable to global price fluctuations (Ibid.). Furthermore, upgrading the quality of one's product may mean giving up well-established market relationships and becoming dependent on less reliable inputs or buyers (Ponte and Ewert 2009). In some cases, 'downgrade' is more beneficial than upgrade (Ibid.). Part of the purpose of GVC analysis is to assess the likelihood that any particular action or strategy will lead to an improvement for a particular firm. Nevertheless, these four types of economic upgrade have proven particularly lucrative for Southern producers (Barrientos et al 2011).

There are further caveats to the benefit of economic upgrade. In the context of Development economics, the underlying assumption is that the firm serves as a proxy for people in the global South more broadly: if a firm does well, its employees can be positively affected through gaining greater job security, avenues for career progression, improved infrastructure as a result of firm investment, etc (Gereffi 2005: 171; Barrientos et al 2011). As for the broader population in the South, they can gain new employment opportunities as local firms grow and employ more staff and/or purchase more inputs and business services from other local firms (Milberg and Winkler 2010). These assumptions have to some extent been substantiated by GVC analysis, but as some critics have pointed out, this line of reasoning resembles the highly problematic neoliberal trickle down logic (Selwyn 2013: 79). To help the poor by helping capitalists appears a rather inefficient, if not perverse, strategy to anybody who is not convinced of the ideological assumptions that underlie neoliberal economics (see e.g. Harvey 2005; Friedman 1970; Thorsen 2009). Rather than advocating increased earnings and value-added capture for *any* type of firm, then, I would argue that a more efficient strategy would be to (also) advocate employee-owned, democratic and non-profit business forms, which by their design share wealth between all employees directly. As for the benefit for the broader population in the South, GVC analysts should note that businesses that intentionally share their wealth with wider society (as all my cases do) are more likely to be effective at this than companies that do not.

With these caveats, however, the contention that economic upgrade generally is beneficial for at least some people in the global South is persuasive. To show how this applies to my case studies I will now briefly point to the ways in they engage in, and benefit from, economic upgrade.

The Zapatistas still export green and unprocessed coffee beans but they are, as Bolwig et al call it, 'getting better paid for the same product' (2010: 177). Though Bolwig et al see

this as a type of upgrade, it is a very different solution compared to what GVC analysts generally refer to when they speak of upgrade. Nevertheless, it has been beneficial for Zapatista coffee farmers. As we saw in chapter 4, Café Libertad pays the Zapatistas a price that is significantly higher and more stable than in conventional coffee markets: it paid approximately 130% of usual market prices in the late 2000s. In addition it added a Zapatista support fund premium of €0.37 per kilo of green coffee, making the total payment per kilo 146% of the mainstream market price. Including the premium, 44% of the retail price before VAT went to the Zapatistas in 2011, and around 35-40% in the years before that, while the equivalent figure in mainstream markets usually ranged between 5 and 20% of the retail price before VAT. Rather than functional or process upgrade, this economic improvement could be said to stem from activities that are not related to business per se: the Zapatistas receive better prices as a result of their ambitious and successful political activism, involvement with global solidarity groups and espousal of political values that others across the world wish to promote and support. This significantly higher and more stable price enables Zapatista coffee farmers to earn more and plan their economies better, but it also contributes to basic social provisions for the wider Zapatista population through the Juntas, for example hospitals, schools, clean running water and roads (Mora 2008).

Café Libertad members cite practical issues to do with cost, transportation and roasting quality as the reasons they are not seeking to shift the roasting and packaging from Germany to Chiapas. Roasted coffee has a short shelf-life which is problematic since the transport times are long, and different consumer countries require very different and specialised roastings. So long as these obstacles are deemed to be prohibitive, then, there are significant limits to the prospects of the Zapatistas achieving continued economic, and especially functional, upgrade.

Café Libertad has offered to send the Zapatistas a spare second hand coffee roasting machine and to pay for the transport of it, as a contribution to a project to roast the *'desmanche'* and to sell it locally in Mexico. For unknown reasons the Zapatistas have not responded to this offer, despite the fact that Café Libertad has returned with it several times (Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012).

The lack of a response from the Zapatistas may be due to any number of reasons: there may have been a lack of resources to take care of this new roasting machine, the machine may not have been needed at the particular time and place it was offered, there may have been a lack of time to make a decision about it – or the coffee farmers may have found it a neocolonial imposition. When I asked Café Libertad members for their interpretations of why the Zapatistas appeared uninterested in the roasting machine

they gave quite different replies. Stephan responded, as already quoted in chapter 4, that it is difficult to get a response from the Zapatistas on anything that does not relate to immediate business concerns and that he is reluctant to speak on their behalf as to why they may be disinterested:

> They mostly only respond if they have coffee to sell. Sometimes we write emails asking a list of questions [about non-business related things] and they just don't answer. […] The Zapatistas want to have a society of their own, they have the right to make their own decisions by themselves, that's what I like about the Zapatista movement.
> (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012)

Folkert gave a very different answer, expressing his suspicion that the EZLN and Zapatista communities harbour reactionary tendencies:

> What I said to someone [when I visited Chiapas in 2004], why don't you create jobs for your kids, create a roastery, do packaging… No answer. […] I think they don't want it. "We are farmers, we stay farmers, and that's it. We don't need any more." […] This is my opinion, my personal opinion. […] If you are talking about Zapatism you get always the indigenous answer: "yeah we like our '*usos y costumbres*', they ways we have been doing it for 500 or 5,000 years".
> (Folkert in interview 8 Nov 2012)

Since the Zapatistas have chosen not to express their voice on this matter explicitly, it remains unclear which, if any, of these explanations is accurate.

Turqle's work is easier to describe using the GVC typology of upgrades. Though Turqle does not use the terms itself and did not report any conscious influence from GVC analysis when asked in interviews, it actively promotes most types of economic upgrade listed by GVC analysts. As for process upgrade, Bomvu and Luhlaza have seen an increase in mechanisation and efficiency since working with Turqle, which they have paid for using incomes from the export markets Turqle has helped them reach (Pieter in interview 11 Sept 2013). Turqle has also helped these companies to become compliant with European food safety standards, which has enabled exports to Europe (Ibid.; Turqle 2014d). As for functional upgrade, Turqle assists their suppliers in gaining the capability to export shelf-ready produce rather than raw materials. This support takes many forms: marketing and liaising with buyers in Europe, gaining and maintaining food safety accreditations, training, product design, and more (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). In certain cases Turqle's support is also very practical:

> At one stage we were supplying [a European buyer] […] and at more or less the same

> time [another buyer] had a big fire in their warehouse and a whole bunch of [produce which had just been shipped there from Luhlaza] got destroyed. So we had to work at [Luhlaza] twenty-four hours a day. So they had a shift with the existing management people that ran daytime, and I worked night-time and ran another team that worked through the night.
> (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013)

Turqle also pays up to 60 percent of the price in advance, i.e. when or soon after the order is placed. This advance payment comes not from Turqle's reserves but from the buyer in Europe – it is thus the latter who decides how large an advance will be paid and whether any interest will be charged on it (Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). It is not uncommon in the fair trade industry for importers to charge the producer firms interest on the advance payment, several of Turqle's large buyers do so. At the time of my fieldwork their interest rate was at around 7% (Ibid.). When buying from small producers Turqle will occasionally donate the cost of this interest to the producer company (Ibid.). Turqle is also lobbying the WFTO to introduce a guideline against charging interest rates on advance payments (Ibid.).

The economic upgrade Turqle facilitates has strengthened Luhlaza and Bomvu through increasing their value-added capture, their size and their turnovers (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013; Bomvu manager in interview 10 Sept 2013; Luhlaza manager in interview 12 Sept 2013). This is a very positive outcome as more money is now entering the rural Western Cape region than before Turqle existed. For Bomvu and Luhlaza as firms this is a wholly beneficial development. If we look inside the firm, however, the outcome for the workers is more complex. On the one hand, since Bomvu and Luhlaza are capitalist companies, economic upgrade results in greater exploitation of workers as company owners become able to earn more profit on the workers' labour. On the other hand, as we will see in section 6-3. below, economic upgrade has brought higher wages and better working conditions.

6-2.2 Qualified Drawbacks

By pointing to the economic upgrade my case studies have experienced, I have aimed to emphasise its benefits – limitations and qualifications withstanding. That economic upgrade is a key part of a forceful response to the colonial division of labour is clear: capturing more value-added helps firms earn more money, grow and offer better and more secure employment. At the same time, however, the decolonial critique of modern capitalism has shown that there can be a downside to economic upgrade if we have too narrow a view of what such upgrade might look like.

One of the critiques of modern development projects expressed by postdevelopment and decolonial scholars is that such projects have built-in aims and notions of value that often imply the superiority of the urban Northern lifestyle over other ways of life (e.g. Escobar 1995; Ziai 2007; Vázquez 2012). Projects that aim to develop the global South often (but far from always) implicitly aim to make the South more like the North (Ibid.). This might include aiming to get people into capitalist employment instead of valuing or promoting other forms of livelihood, such as communal production, non-monetary exchange, gift economies, etc (Gibson-Graham 2007). It might also mean setting the earning or accumulation of money as a central aim in development: for example, development projects may measure their success by earnings or turnovers rather than other more qualitative indicators (Ibid.). Furthermore, it might involve promoting the organisation of workplaces according to particular formal hierarchies rather than letting other organisational models, such as egalitarian or rotational ones, develop or remain (Lie 2007). By advocating aims and models in the global South that are perceived to have 'worked' in the global North, development projects can inadvertently promote an economic, and therefore also cultural, Northernification of the South; or more accurately, a capitalist-modernisation of the South (since not all of the North is modern or capitalist – which is not to imply that none of the South already is).

This is not to dismiss the entire development project but to highlight that economic upgrade as a concept is particularly susceptible to this type of problematic. Indeed, the vast majority of GVC analysis research has advocated the advancement of modern capitalist economic relations and has failed to critique the capitalist business form as such (Selwyn 2013). Study after study in the GVC literature investigates how capitalist companies can upgrade and earn more money, which often includes modern-capitalist measures such as rationalisation, specialisation, mechanisation that relies on fossil fuels, acquisition of skills and philosophies taught in business schools, and more (see e.g. Evers et al 2014; Morris et al 2011; Humphrey 2003; Gibbon 2001). In pointing this out I am not arguing that GVC analysis is to blame for the global spread of modern capitalism, or that GVC analysts are necessarily wrong to be promoting such upgrade. The aim of mainstream GVC literature is best understood as an analysis of how to ameliorate a bad situation, how to improve the pay and conditions of producers in the South given prevailing global economic trends. This is a very worthwhile project that is likely to improve or save millions of lives. What we must be clear about, however, is that economic upgrade can entail the capitalist-modernisation of Southern firms and their workers, especially when prevailing assumptions around value are not critiqued. To the extent that upgrade means further industrialisation, the redesign of economic production to reproduce capitalist models as taught in neoliberal business schools, formalisation and so on, the outcome for Southern producers is rather paradoxical:

countering colonial inequalities requires becoming more similar to the coloniser. The postdevelopment scholars asks: where is the liberation in this?

As critics of postdevelopment have pointed out, the question of what is anticolonial is sometimes muddled with the question of what provides for everybody's needs (Kiely 1999). Non-modern cultures and traditions can be as oppressive and hierarchical as modern ones, which creates a paradox in the anticolonial argument. If the objective of an anticolonial position is to reject the domination of one group of people (the South) by another (the North), it cannot logically be used to protect the domination of one group of people by another within the South.

Turqle has been the one of our case studies who has especially faced the dilemma of upgrade as capitalist-modernisation. Since the staff of the producers Turqle works with have not organised themselves as a politically active group, it is difficult or impossible for Turqle (and for this research project) to gain information about what forms of organisation the workers prefer. Furthermore, when it comes to the organisation of the workplace and the conceptions of value within it, neither Turqle nor the workers have had any choice in the design of their producer companies (see chapter 5). The questions about what value and upgrade should be have thus been answered by the producer company owners and Turqle respectively – not by workers. We saw in the previous chapter that Turqle has found the inclusion of workers in those conversations on the Board of the Trust too difficult and too costly. This is not seen by Turqle as a major problem since the decisions made by the Board, as they see it, are largely technical. As quoted in chapter 5:

> The decisions are very simple: it depends on how much money there is, what proportion of the school fees are being paid, and what is left over for other educational things. That's it. So it isn't as if there's huge ideological discussions or whatever that people need to feed into.
> (Rain in interview 3 Sept 2013)

My contention here, supported by decolonial, postdevelopment and political economy literatures, is that these decisions are indeed ideological. The failure to attract or accommodate workers' participation on the Trust, or to successfully encourage workers to organise in their own way, should be taken more seriously. In other words, there should be voice upgrade – more of which below.

Café Libertad has not had to deal with such problems since the Zapatistas have formed their own political and productive organisational forms, which are largely egalitarian

and democratic (see exceptions in chapter 4). In addition, the absence of functional, process or other more common forms of economic upgrade in this case study means the risks associated with them are not present. Getting 'better paid for the same product' comes with its own limitation however. It has very limited scope for long term progression given that Café Libertad, as we saw in chapter 4, wishes to keep its prices as low as possible to avoid out-pricing working class consumers. While the Zapatistas can use its solidarity networks to gain a higher income for its green coffee production, thus, there is little scope for further economic improvement beyond this. As GVC analysts have persuasively shown (Daviron and Ponte 2005), the most lucrative tasks in the coffee value chain lie in roasting, packaging and marketing, which are tasks the Zapatistas are no closer to taking over. (Aside from the empirical discussion here, it is of course possible to imagine a hypothetical scenario in which the Zapatistas achieve functional, process or other upgrade without becoming more hierarchical or Northern.)

Comparing these case studies and discussions around anticolonial literatures, then, we find that economic upgrade can be a contradictory process for Southern producers. Economic upgrade is empowering in that it counteracts the global division of labour and provides Southern producers with greater resources. When assumptions around value are too anchored in modern capitalism, however, economic upgrade amounts to Northernification and hierarchicalisation. Turqle's activities are especially vulnerable to criticism in this respect since they deal with capitalist companies whose workers have not found a comprehensible way to organise and express themselves politically. Café Libertad's activities, on the other hand, are vulnerable to the exact opposite critique in that attempts at economic upgrade have been very limited and that paying more money for the same product only can lead to so much advancement.

6-3. SOCIAL UPGRADE

6-3.1 Social Upgrade in GVC Analysis

Social upgrade is a concept developed in GVC analysis in recent years to address improvements for workers, rather than for firms as a whole (Barrientos et al 2011). Whereas economic upgrade is only *indirectly* and *potentially* beneficial for employees of a firm, social upgrade addresses their working conditions and pay directly. Social upgrade could therefore be understood as the primary aim of GVC upgrade, towards which economic upgrade is instrumental. Social upgrade is a very broad concept that encompasses many aspects of worker wellbeing, and also the wellbeing of the broader community or locality where firms are based. Barrientos et al list some examples of social upgrading as:

> for example, a worker that has acquired skills in one job is able to move a better job elsewhere in a GPN […] [improvements in] category of employment (regular or irregular), wage level, social protection and working hours […,] the percentage of women supervisors or the percentage of union members in the workforce […,] freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, non-discrimination, voice and empowerment.
> (2011: 7)

The concept of social upgrade was first introduced in the literature in 2010 when the Capturing the Gains research project made it a central analytical device (Milberg and Winkler 2010; Barrientos et al 2011). Before that a small minority of works in the literature had studied the impact of economic upgrade on workers, though without a unified analytical framework (e.g. Anker et al 2002; Herod 2001). Some of these studies took cues from the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which was also the main inspiration for the concept of social upgrade in the Capturing the Gains project (Barrientos et al 2011). The fact that GVC analysts did not develop this concept until 2010 speaks to the prevalence within this literature of the assumption that firm wealth would automatically trickle down to firm employees (Selwyn 2013). In addition, the very distinction between economic and social upgrade presumes a capitalist or otherwise ownership-segregated organisation of production since the distinction does not make sense when applied to, for example, a workers' co-operative: if the workers and the owners of a firm are the same people then benefit for the firm automatically means benefit for the owner-workers. One of Selwyn's critiques of the notion of social upgrade is therefore that it tends to play the role of capitalist apologist, making the exploitative relations of capitalism palatable by ameliorating employees' poverty and working conditions (2013: 81-82). The latter point can also be put in a less cynical way: social upgrade legitimates workers' struggles for improved conditions in capitalist workplaces (Ibid. p. 87). As such social upgrade can play an important role in improving the lives of the billions of workers in the world who are forced to take capitalist employment. What is lacking in the GVC literature, however, and what this thesis partly aims to contribute to, is a view to what something that is even more beneficial for workers than ameliorated capitalist employment might look like.

6-3.2 Social Upgrade in Turqle, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad

The comparison between our case studies illustrates the above points. Turqle, which does not work in a context in which workers have organised themselves or their own production, deals with capitalist companies. Since the economic upgrade experienced by these firms do not automatically lead to improvements for the workers, Turqle has

placed specific requirements on their supplier firms as well as created its Fair Trade Trust to target the welfare of workers and their families. As we saw in chapter 5, the requirements placed on producer firms revolve around, firstly, paying workers a living wage or working towards doing so:

> We work currently with all of our producers and the goal is to – although most of them are already there – by 2015 to ensure that everybody gets paid a living wage. Which, again, was worked out based on South African conditions, what does it cost a family with two adults two kids to live on a sustainable basis and be able to have a portion for saving for schooling, for everything else.
> (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013)

Secondly, Turqle requires its suppliers to have worker representation in the firm, whether through unionisation or workers' committees. Both Bomvu and Luhlaza have opted for workers' committees since their staff are not unionised (Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). Unions are deeply entrenched in South African parliamentary politics (Plaut and Holden 2012) and a member of management staff at Bomvu described incidents at the company in the past where a union had appeared to be putting its own political interests above the needs of workers (Bomvu manager in interview 10 Sept 2013). This thesis is not the place to analyse and discuss South Africa's union politics; suffice to note that the decision by workers to decline joining a union should not necessarily be seen as a sign in and of itself that they lack an interest to organise to protect their rights. Turqle offers support to workers' committees to support their efficacy:

> And if they choose not to be unionised then we insist that there should be functioning workers' committees. And again we pay for the training of the people that are then elected onto this worker's committee so they know what their rights are, their responsibilities are, and monitor that, to ensure that there is interaction between the workers' committee and management and that the workers basically have a voice, in terms of, whether it's wage negotiations, working conditions, whatever the issues happen to be, so, we train them so that, for instance, their meetings should have minutes so that there is a follow-up and things like that.
> (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013)

Thirdly, Turqle pays for staff training in workplace health and safety, for example first aid, fire safety and accident prevention (Ibid.).

As a member of the World Fair Trade Organisation, Turqle has also committed to its foundational fair trade principles. The social upgrade elements of these principles

include, in addition to the measures just mentioned, ensuring there is no child labour and no forced labour in the supplier firms; a 'commitment to non discrimination, gender equity and women's economic empowerment'; and compliance with ILO conventions on health and safety and working conditions (WFTO 2013).

Turqle conducts annual audits to check that supplier companies are living up to their requirements. In addition to these audits, some of the largest buyers in Europe carry out their own independent audits:

> Each producer is formally reviewed by independent monitors and a representative of Fair Trade Original [Turqle's Dutch importer] on a 3 yearly cycle. (Turqle is also audited - results available on request) They try - where possible - to interview someone from management, but also (depending on the size of the organisation), someone from a workers' committee, a shop steward, or a senior supervisor. During the assessment process, the evaluators/monitors construct a feedback document **with** each producer, highlighting the areas of compliance, minor non-compliances, significant non-compliances and major non-compliances. A plan is then generated for the producer to work towards achieving a measurable improvement within a specific timeframe. […] At the end of the process, all the producers are invited to attend a workshop. Common 'problem areas' are workshopped - discussed with peers, advisors and various professionals - and at the end, they commit to a work-plan to improve the non-compliances. If the action required is expensive and potentially outside the producers' budget, a plan will be made to secure part of the funding from an appropriate funding organisation. For example, where additional staff training is required, application can be made to the Fair Trade Trust.
> (Turqle 2014f, emphasis in original)

In addition to placing requirements on their supplier companies, Turqle also provides its own social upgrading services though the Fair Trade Trust as we saw in chapter 5. To evaluate the Trust's benefit for workers it carries out its own monitoring separately to the audits just mentioned. This includes an annual audit as well as qualitative interviews with participants at the end of training days. To gather further data, Turqle also runs competitions where workers are encouraged to submit evidence in the form of pictures and writing:

> Sarah: We have a quarterly competition with all the factories, everybody who participates and gets anything from the Trust is welcome to enter. At the beginning of the year we asked the kids to submit a photo of them on their first day of school and to tell us what they were hoping to learn from the year, and from the entrants we got one was randomly selected and they won a 200 rand gift voucher to whichever shop was closest to them. At the middle of the year we did one where they had to pen something on the

> courses, so we asked them to submit, telling us what they had learnt, how they felt that the Trust had impacted on their lives, again selected one and they got a voucher […]. Everybody who entered, I bought them a fair trade chocolate with a note on saying thank you [to encourage future participation].
> (Author interview 17 Sept 2013)

As we saw in chapter 5, there are challenges in getting workers to participate in the running of the Trust, and occasionally to take an interest in the training. The disinterest from workers may be a form of everyday resistance (Scott 1985) or exit (Hirschman 1970). Working with capitalist companies whose staff are not organised have left Turqle with the challenging tasks of both constructing, promoting and evaluating its own social upgrading programmes.

In the case of Café Libertad and the Zapatistas, on the other hand, social upgrade is not an applicable concept since Zapatista farmers own and run their businesses collectively and make their own democratic decisions about how to spend communal incomes. Café Libertad has no Fair Trade Trust, does not spend any of its time encouraging the Zapatistas to undertake training or other social upgrade, and does not measure or evaluate the benefit the solidarity support fund has in Zapatista communities (Folkert in interview 19 April 2013 and 20 April 2013).

Folkert described in an interview that Café Libertad initially directed its solidarity fund towards specific projects but that these projects often turned out to be initiated and led by Western volunteers rather than by the Zapatistas themselves (Folkert in interview 20 April 2013). As a result, the projects were often unsuccessful since Zapatista communities had not requested them and they did not feel ownership of them. For example, foreign volunteers along with Café Libertad once initiated an eco-oven project in which ovens were built that ran on renewable fuels. When Café Libertad returned a year later, they found that the ovens were not being used and that people were cooking on wood fires just as they had done before (Ibid.). Today Café Libertad occasionally selects specific projects to support – for example it has a long-running relationship with the water and plumbing project Kiptik which is based in Bristol, UK, and which visits Chiapas regularly to install and maintain drinking water systems – but the support fund is predominantly free for the Zapatistas to administer as they wish (Ibid.).

As we saw in chapter 4 the Zapatistas, like Turqle and its Trust, have their share of power discrepancies and difficulties in engaging all social groups equally. What makes them fundamentally different from Turqle's suppliers, however, are their formally democratic governance and ownership structures (with the likely exception of the farm

level) and the norms and values around participatory democracy and making one's voice heard.

6-4. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUE

GVC analysis thus distinguishes between economic and social upgrade. Having discussed some strengths and limitations of the processes these concepts denote, I will now turn to a more analytical critique of GVC analysis and its concepts of upgrade as such. In this section I will argue that the distinction between economic upgrade in the one hand, and social upgrade on the other, is flawed. I use the concept of value in order to illustrate and make sense of this point.

As we saw in chapter 3, the concept of value has been used ever since Marx to particularly clearly illustrate the ways in which the economic and the social are inseparable. In order to survive and live a comfortable life, humans must produce food and other things; they must work. Questions that soon arise are who should do how much work, and what kind of work (Graeber 2001, Henderson 2013). In capitalism, the labourers do all the work and receive as little payment as possible, while the capitalists do none of the work and receive all the profit. Marx used the notion of value to highlight this exploitative relationship. He showed that what is presented by capitalists as a politically neutral economic concept is actually a politically charged sociological notion.

Portraying value as a merely technical economic term (as in for example Gereffi et al 2001) masks the politics underlying it. J.K. Gibson-Graham elaborate on the governmental nature of the image of the (capitalist) economy as ontologically pre-human and pre-cultural (2006a). Seeing the economic as inevitable and self-sustaining (yet paradoxically subject to tinkering by economic experts) makes the contents of that realm seem more real, solid and inescapable than that which can be found in the realm of the social (Mitchell 2008: 451, see also Castree 2004). It also enables the deployment of the image of the economy as a self-regulating machine. As Gibson-Graham point out, a common image within neoclassical economic writing and certain types of marxist-structuralist theory is the image of the capitalist economy as an autonomous body that evolves according to natural laws, uncontrollable by humans and impossible to halt (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 95; Mirowski 1987; Sharzer 2012). This image of the economy implies not only that highly educated experts alone can know how it functions, but also that nobody can change its function to any significant extent (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 95). In other words, the representation of the economic as a separate sphere (or a separate type of upgrade) is not only ontologically incorrect given a capillary view of

power, but it is also prone to reinforcing elite power.

The distinction in GVC analysis between economic and social upgrade, I argue, arises out of the contradiction between egalitarian development aims on the one hand, and the capitalist business form on the other. Neoliberal development economists, including GVC analysts, have assumed that the capitalist business form can facilitate development that significantly benefits workers in the South (Bair 2005; Selwyn 2013 – for examples see Nadvi 2011; Coe and Hess 2013; Gibbon 2001 and most other GVC studies). Capitalist businesses may be able to offer employment to its workers, but any benefits accruing to workers of capitalist companies is by necessity limited (e.g. Graeber 2001, 2006; Zein-Elabdin 2004). As we have seen, a capitalist business is designed to distribute work and remuneration as unevenly as possible: the labourers do all of the work and receive as low a wage as the market will allow, while the capitalists do none of the work and receive as high a profit as the market will allow (Marx 2015 [1887]; Fine 1989). Granted, in practice markets are not 'free' and are not the only force that influences prices and wages since for example government regulation and taxes interfere, but the fundamental logic of the capitalist business form is nonetheless to exploit workers and distribute work and remuneration as unevenly as possible.

Capitalist economic theorists have their own ways of justifying and rendering palatable the capitalist productive model, for example through referring to the allegedly unavoidable selfishness of human nature (e.g. Friedman 1970) or to the arduousness from the point of view of the capitalist of refraining from consuming one's wealth immediately and instead investing it into a capitalist business (what neoclassical economists refer to as 'utility', see e.g. Senior 1872 and Marshall 1920). The logic implicit in the promotion of social upgrade is, however, different from the logic of capitalism. Though GVC analysts do not tend to speak about their underlying social aims explicitly, which I see as a shortcoming, it is clear that some more egalitarian, albeit moderately so, outcomes are desired. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda, upon which the concept of social upgrade is built, speaks of 'people's well-being' (presumably all people's), 'broader social and economic advancement' and 'sustainable livelihoods' (ILO 2015). These implicit aims, and the explicit insistence upon the improvement of working conditions in global value chains, are quite different from the values implicit in the capitalist model of production, which revolve around hierarchy and elitism.

By introducing the concept of social upgrade, GVC analysts are showing their awareness of the fact that capitalist economic production tends to lead to the realisation of capitalist aims rather than any other ones – a fact that comes as little surprise to the capillary theorist of power who sees political means and ends as necessarily linked (Day 2005).

Instead of advocating forms of organisation of production that match their egalitarian aims, however, GVC analysts have settled for the notion of social upgrade as an amelioration of capitalist forms. While this is admirable as it can improve the lives of many, the improvement it can bring is limited. As I will argue in the next chapter, action leading to any *radical* change must match strategic means with ultimate aims.

In this section I have argued that the economic and the social are inseparable. The distinction between economic and social upgrade stems from the disjuncture between egalitarian development aims and the social aims underlying the capitalist business form. The value that GVC analysts seek to upgrade is thus not only economic, but also social. This leads us to the next step in my argument regarding upgrade, which concerns the importance of speaking and listening about the values underlying production. In the next section I will argue for the introduction of a third category of upgrade that pays attention to the normative social ideals that underlie economic models.

6-5. VOICE UPGRADE

As we saw above, value is usefully understood as a question concerning how work should be divided up between people in society, and what we should spend our time on; in other words, what kinds of social relations should be created and reproduced. Value is not predominantly a technical term, but a site of political struggle. What I argue in this section is that, as well as (but ideally instead of) assuming a capitalist understanding of economic value, ameliorated through the notion of social upgrade, GVC analysis must become attentive to dialogues and struggles over value. One way of doing this would be to analyse and encourage what I call 'voice upgrade': an improvement in people's ability within the chain to speak and listen about values.

Unlike some authors who have emphasised the necessity of convergence and consensus in ethico-political negotiation (see for example Habermas' notion of communicative rationality critiqued in Rienstra and Hook 2006), voice upgrade does not necessarily require a convergence of views or a stable agreement between actors (see Mouffe's arguments on radical democracy in Mouffe 1999). Rather than being understood as increased universal agreement, voice upgrade should be understood as the increased ability to express one's views, to be listened to by others, and to listen to others regarding value. While maintaining trade relations within or between organisations requires co-operation, this does not necessitate individuals believing in or doing the same thing.

In order to illustrate the concept of voice upgrade and to operationalise it in addressing the research question at the heart of this thesis, I start by briefly discussing the ways in which this concept could, and to an extent already has, fit into the GVC literature. In the subsequent section, section 6-5.2, I apply it to my two case studies.

6-5.1 Voice Upgrade in GVC Analysis

Questions regarding the say and influence of people along the value chain are by no means foreign to GVC analysis. Since its inception, as we saw in chapter 2, GVC analysis has included a second main analytical category alongside upgrade: that of governance. Though several studies have found that certain types of chain governance tend to be more beneficial for firms in the global South than other types of governance – namely more committed and less competitive ones rather than market-based structures (see e.g. Humphrey and Schmitz 2000; Pimbert et al 2001) – GVC analysts rarely connect analyses of upgrade to analyses of governance. One notable exception is Bolwig et al 2011. They discuss not governance as such, but they cite 'Improv[ing] value chain coordination' as an upgrading strategy for small agricultural producers (p. 36). Expressing a similar argument as aforementioned governance analysts, Bolwig et al write that producers can '"get [...] a better deal" through closer and longer-term business ties with buyers' (Ibid.). They add that organisation and federation across individual producers is also beneficial, which we have seen our own evidence of here, in the form of Zapatista farms affiliated through coffee co-operatives.

Aside from such exceptions, however, the GVC literature tends to discuss governance and upgrade as separate phenomena. Furthermore, the focus in discussions of governance has remained on two aspects: firstly who in the chain is the 'lead firm', and secondly what 'governance structure' characterises the chain. The lead firm in a chain is the 'particularly powerful compan[y]' 'the core actor[...]' that co-ordinates the chain (Gibbon et al 2008: 316; 320). Governance structures, meanwhile, typify power relationships between firms in a chain, ranging from hierarchical relationships to network-based ones. That power relations between firms are analysed in this manner should be welcomed, but one difference between governance and what I call voice upgrade is that the former is vulnerable to the same critique levelled by Selwyn's above: it treats the firm as a unified entity and fails to analyse its internal power relations (Selwyn 2013).

When they introduced the concept of social upgrade as part of the Capturing the Gains research project, Barrientos et al took a leap closer to observing the complexities within firms. In their list of examples of social upgrade they include, as well as the things

discussed above in section 6-3.1, 'the right to […] voice and empowerment' (2011: 7). Upgrade as voice and empowerment comes very close to my notion of voice upgrade, though I would object to placing this notion as a sub-type of social upgrade since the latter notion is premised upon the assumption that firms have a capitalist division of labour and ownership structure. The inclusion of voice and empowerment in Barrientos et al's list could also be seen as somewhat gratuitous given that the terms are neither elaborated upon nor discussed anywhere else in their article, and rarely if ever feature in subsequent studies.

I argue that voice should be understood as a category of upgrade in its own right. I will now outline how such a concept allows an analysis of power relations both within and between firms in relation to value.

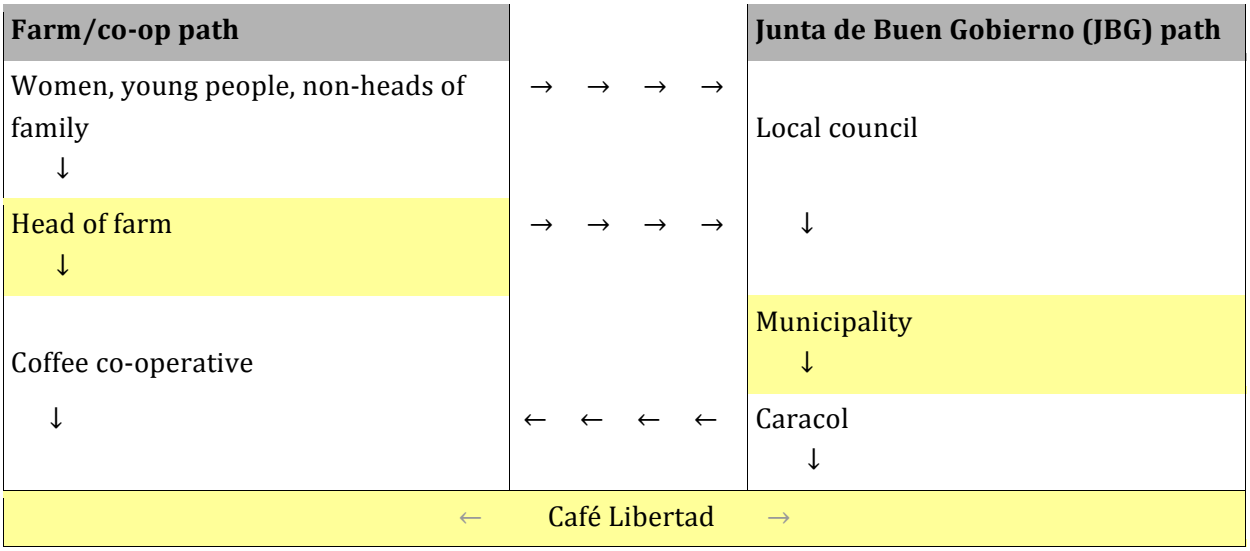
6-5.2 Voice Upgrade in the Zapatistas, Café Libertad and Turqle

Looking at our case studies, different prevailing conditions have produced different problematics in struggles and dialogues about value. Let us start by looking at the Zapatistas and Café Libertad since the issue of voice has been given much more attention by those two actors. As we saw in chapter 4, the Zapatistas are an autonomously and democratically organised political group. Café Libertad was created five years after the 1994 EZLN uprising to support their struggle. A core part of the Zapatistas' activities is to prefigure a government that is autonomous from the national Mexican government (in the sense that it refuses as far as possible to abide by its laws, pay taxes and receive funding from it) and that is governed through a participatory democratic structure (Chatterton 2007). Rather than seeking to replace the Mexican government's hegemony with their own, the Zapatistas have organised their governance according to a federal structure where different Caracoles can make their own decisions and implement different programmes (Ibid.). There is thus no leader or sovereign council that can force Caracoles, municipalities or local councils to abide by certain decisions (though common agreements can be made across the Caracoles that include common implementation and evaluation plans, see e.g. Zapatistas 2013). Gendered and racial/colonial oppression remain as obstacles to universal participation in these democratic governance structures, though ever since their emergence the EZLN and Junta representatives have run inclusion and empowerment programmes, with mixed success (Millán 1998; EZLN 2002a). In terms of people's relations to the means of production, farms are generally speaking formally owned collectively but in practice according to patriarchal traditions, though farms are organised collectively through co-operatives.

Parallel to a commodity chain of inputs and outputs (as depicted in chapter 4, figure 4.3)

we can envisage a chain of voice or representation:

Figure 6.1: Chain of Voice in Zapatistas – Café Libertad



Women, young people and other non-heads of family must typically go via their family head to make decisions at the farm level. These then attend meetings of and elect representatives to the coffee co-operatives (Aroma Zapatista 2014). Café Libertad liaises directly with coffee co-operatives via phone, email and occasional face-to-face visits, but it also communicates with the overlapping Junta de Buen Gobierno (JBG) structure. The Caracoles can make decisions that override the coffee co-operatives – one example being the decision that coffee co-operatives must share their surplus with the broader community (Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 2003). Women, young people and all men can therefore (at least in theory) influence decision-making through the JBG path, which was detailed in figure 4.8. However, as we saw in chapter 4, it must not be forgotten that women are both generally speaking disenfranchised at the farm level and participate less in the JBG governance structure than men do (Millán 1998). The Caracoles are currently working towards an improvement of gender equality, as detailed in Zapatistas 2013.

Gender inequalities, then, saturate all Zapatista governance while additional ownership inequalities exist at the farm level. This limits the extent to which voices can be expressed within Zapatista communities. In addition to this there are dysfunctions in communications about value between the Zapatistas and Café Libertad. The arrows going from Café Libertad towards the coffee co-operatives and Caracoles in Figure 6.1 are light grey in colour to signify that the communications in these directions tend to

fizzle out and be left without response, and possibly without being read, heard or passed on by co-operative and Caracol representatives to other Zapatista members (see chapter 4). To be clear, what I am pointing out as problematic here is not the absence of stable agreement or consensus across these two actors, but the absence of mutual speaking and listening.

What is striking is the discrepancy between the Zapatistas' and Café Libertad's internal governance structures on the one hand, and the governance of relations between them on the other. Their internal decision-making structures are designed to include all members in participatory-democratic processes, and are highly suited for accommodating discussions and struggles over value. These decision-making structures consist of tools such as written policies, designated roles of responsibility (e.g. rotating representatives and officers), regular meetings and written minutes. What does not exist, however, is a formalised facility for communicating about value *across* these two actors. While orders and deliveries are regulated by written contracts, virtually all other communication is sporadic, person-dependent, inconsistent and dysfunctional (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012).

This dysfunction has led to a lack of trust and/or proximity to their trading partner on the part of many Café Libertad members, and presumably Zapatista members too (Ibid.). Several interviewees at Café Libertad expressed frustration (alongside some sympathy) that they could not receive responses from coffee co-operative representatives to some of their political questions and questions concerning what values the Zapatistas are working towards (for example: how well-received is the Women's Revolutionary Law among broader Zapatista communities? What is the position of the Caracoles and EZLN regarding patriarchal farms ownership and the occasional use of casualised farm labour?). The Zapatistas, on their part, are negatively affected through being met with a lack of trust and through facing impasses around for example requests for further financial support and deadline extensions, as we saw in chapter 4.

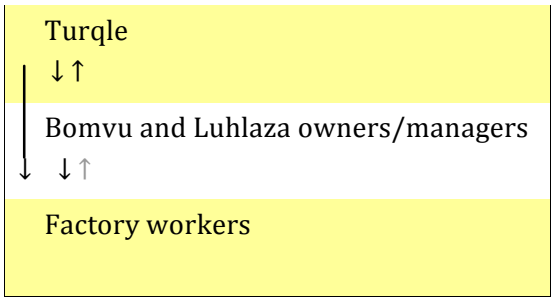
In summary, then, the governance structures and practices of the Zapatistas and Café Libertad, compared with those of conventional coffee industry actors, embody a significant upgrade in people's ability to speak and listen *within* the own organisation, but less so *across* organisations. Let us now turn more briefly to Turqle, which has not focused on what I call upgrade as voice to the same extent as the Zapatistas and Café Libertad.

Turqle, as we saw in chapter 5, works with capitalist suppliers, which are not

democratically organised with the exception of the workers' committees that Turqle requires. These committees provide a channel through which workers can express their views, but since formal ownership is concentrated in the hands of company owners the influence of the committees is limited (Pieter in interview 11 Sept 2013; Bomvu owner and Bomvu manager in interview 10 Sept 2013; Luhlaza owner/manager in interview 12 Sept 2013). When it comes to the Fair Trade Trust, Turqle has opted for a governance structure that is not participatory-democratic due to what it perceives as the practical difficulties of involving worker delegates and the disinterest among workers in getting involved (Ibid.). When it has carried out consultations, Turqle has found that workers ask for things Turqle believes the Trust should not provide, such as satellite TV and housing.

In contrast to the previous case study, then, there are few opportunities for workers to express their views on value. In Figure 6.2, the chain of representation starts downstream rather than upstream. Turqle makes decisions with company owners and managers, who in turn have decision-making power over workers. The grey arrow arising from the workers represents the limited influence workers have through workers' committees and informal discussions with their superiors. Turqle also has a direct line of influence on the workers when it comes to the activities of the Trust – though the Board of the Trust consists of only one member of Turqle and two external individuals (at the time of my fieldwork, one was an independent consultant and the other a member of the NGO Philani, which delivers the Trust's training).

Figure 6.2: Chain of Voice in Turqle



This relatively hierarchical structure is hardly the result of any megalomania on the part of Turqle – rather, I argue, it stems from the fact that Turqle works with people who do not identify or organise themselves as a political group. Turqle is attempting to empower workers, but the workers are not interested in participating the decision-making channels Turqle can offer. The workers' disinterest could be understood as an example of everyday resistance (Scott 1985) or exit (Hirschman 1970). As a result, Turqle has resolved to focus on offering training that teaches critical thinking, organisational skills

and literacy, as a way to equip and entice workers. As we saw above, some workers engage in this training with enthusiasm, and others with reluctance.

When comparing these two case studies, we see that upgrade as voice is strongly influenced by group identification and self-organisation. Unable to create an organisational infrastructure on the workers' behalf over which the workers feel ownership and interest, Turqle has decided to focus on offering training and economic and social upgrade for the time being. By contrast, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad have set up their own participatory-democratic decision-making structures that in theory include everybody, but in practice suffer from inequalities based on gender and farm-level status (the Zapatistas) as well as on level of experience or assertiveness (Café Libertad and the Zapatistas).

6-6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the measures prefigurative traders can and do take in order to equalise trade relations across colonial divides. Following from chapter 3, I seek in this thesis to consider not only economic inequalities but also the colonial and patriarchal ones as all three co-constitute each other in my stylised conception of the colonial matrix.

I started this chapter with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of economic upgrade. While it addresses the colonial division of labour between the core and periphery head on, it is problematic in that it relies on the assumption that wealth trickles down from capitalist elites to the general population. Furthermore, in capitalist companies economic upgrade entails increased exploitation for workers. We saw the benefit that economic upgrade has brought to Bomvu and Luhlaza, who were not only smaller, less efficient and economically weaker before their collaborations with Turqle, but who were also unable to export shelf-ready produce to Europe. These economic improvements have improved workers' chances at gaining better working conditions, but only thanks to Turqle's social upgrade strategies. In and of itself, economic upgrade entails an increased level of exploitation for workers. Meanwhile, the Zapatistas have experienced a more unusual form of economic upgrade: 'getting better paid for the same product' (Bolwig et al 2010: 177). While avoiding the problematic aspects of functional-, process and other common forms of upgrade, this type of upgrade has only limited scope for progression in the longer term.

Social upgrade benefits workers directly. Turqle has implemented requirements on their

suppliers to ensure social upgrade, for example living wages and worker representation, and in addition offers training, education and the payment of school fees through the Fair Trade Trust. Turqle dedicates significant time and energy to auditing and evaluating these programmes. Café Libertad, by contrast, does not require the Zapatistas to adhere to any particular rules or policies, and does not carry out audits. This is because the Zapatistas are democratically and collectively organised and run their own social improvements programmes – examples being the women's inclusion programme outlined and evaluated in Zapatistas 2013, and Junta spending on roads, hospitals, schools, and other social welfare and infrastructure.

Indeed, I have argued that the very distinction between economic and social upgrade stems from the disjuncture between egalitarian development aims on the one hand and capitalist hierarchy on the other. This bifurcation in upgrades – as well as values more generally – serves to portray capitalism as politically neutral or inevitable, when actually it is highly political (Gibson-Graham 2006a; Zein-Elabdin 2004; Blaney and Inayatullah 2010). As I argued in section 6-4., value is best understood not as a technical economic concept, but as question (or set of questions) around how to distribute work and remuneration in society, how to structure social relations concerning (re)production and what to spend time on (Henderson 2013; Graeber 2001).

Finally, I introduced the notion of 'voice upgrade', which I argued could serve as a tool for analysing and encouraging improvements in people's abilities within the chain to speak and listen about values. GVC analysis already pays attention to questions of governance in value chains, but these discussions have hitherto focused exclusively on inter-firm relations, have not generally been linked to notions of upgrade, and have not engaged in discussions around value or the inter-relatedness of the economic and the social.

What is now left to clarify and discuss is the second part of the research question, namely: given that we now have some idea of what equalised trade relations might look like, is prefiguration a successful tool for achieving it? The next chapter, therefore, deals with the nature, logic and effectiveness of prefigurative politics as a social movement strategy.

Chapter 7

A Successful Tool: Entanglement and Disentanglement

7-1. INTRODUCTION

We recall our central research question: are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides? Having examined how, and which types of, upgrade could generate more equal trading relations across colonial borders, we now turn to the second main constituent part of that question: what is 'a successful tool' in this context? It is one thing to understand, as we did in chapter 6, what kind of upgrade one might prefigure – and another thing to understand what significance such prefiguration might have for the actual equalisation of trade relations in the world. In this chapter I address the question of success in two senses: firstly, whether our case studies are successful at meeting the challenges to disentanglement that they face, and secondly, what the significance of prefigurative trading for upgrade might be to the world at large.

We have already gained some insight into the ways in which our case study organisations manage to disentangle the colonial matrix and the ways in which they do not – this chapter pulls together the strings from previous chapters and reflects on the political impact and significance these prefigurative trading projects can and do achieve. I start in section 7-2. by comparing the challenges our case study organisations meet in their pursuit of disentanglement. Are Café Libertad, the Zapatistas and Turqle successful at meeting these challenges? The answer to this question – which has already begun to be addressed throughout the thesis – is perhaps the most central one in attempting to ascertain whether these organisations' activities are successful tools for equalising trade relations. There are, however, other important parts to assessing their success. What kind of political influence could disentanglement have – is prefigurative egalitarian trading relevant to wider society or does it leave the colonial matrix unaffected? In this chapter I argue that maintaining entangled in the colonial matrix is just as important for our case studies as disentangling – entanglement should be seen as a strength of their prefigurativism rather than a weakness. The subsequent section, section 7-3., therefore outlines and compares the challenges these organisations meet in remaining entangled, and their responses to those challenges.

What we find in these two sections is that the challenges both in disentangling the colonial matrix and in remaining entangled with it, are similar in both case studies. Despite their dissimilarities – Café Libertad and the Zapatistas working largely without

capitalism and without the explicit aim of functional, product or process upgrade, and Turqle working with capitalist suppliers with the explicit aim of such upgrade – both cases face the greatest challenge in achieving what I have called voice upgrade. Perhaps surprisingly, by contrast, staying afloat economically has not been such a significant challenge.

In the penultimate section, 7-4., I turn to the significance of prefigurative action. I highlight that our ontological interpretation of power and society strongly influence the way we conceptualise success. I argue that a capillary view of power renders the scope of success for any political strategy more limited than ontologies that view power as centralised. If power is dispersed throughout society, overthrowing the government or other hegemonic institutions will only amount to partial social change, as will any given example of prefigurative political action (Day 2005). Our case studies, thus, cannot equalise trade relations everywhere and for everybody, but for the people they work and engage with. Contrary to what some critics imply, this does not render prefigurativists insular or averse to working in solidarity with others in society. As we will see, Turqle, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad all organise together with others – *together with*, rather than *on behalf of* – to amplify and co-ordinate their influence. They also dedicate time and energy to becoming more visible to the general population, aiming to gain both political support, allies and customers. This, too, is an illustration of how the near inevitability of entanglement in the colonial matrix is a strength as well as a limitation to prefigurativism. In section 7-5. I conclude this chapter.

7-2. THE CHALLENGE OF DISENTANGLING

Social movement theorist Chris Dixon describes prefigurativism as an inevitable contradiction: prefiguration is at once impossible and necessary:

> On the one hand, developing entirely new and emancipatory social relations isn't possible, is never fully possible in the context of exploitation and oppression. On the other hand, developing new social relations is crucial to building visionary movements capable of transforming the world.
> (Dixon 2009)

To engage in prefigurativism is to exist in a constant tension between entanglement and disentanglement. In this section and the next one I aim to highlight the areas that pose the greatest and the least challenges to our case studies in navigating these two extremes. In this section I focus on disentanglement and in the next, entanglement. We will see that, in both case studies, the task of living in accordance with one's egalitarian

ideals is more challenging than the task of merely surviving in a capitalist economy. This might sound unsurprising at first glance, but the finding that these prefigurative traders have relatively few problems surviving financially – despite their reluctance to exploit or compete against others – is very noteworthy. I will discuss this in the subsequent section. In the current section I will focus on challenges to disentanglement, which I argue need to be addressed by prefigurativists through specific formalised mechanisms. Without specific attention, relations can veer towards entanglement rather than disentanglement.

7-2.1 Between Organisations

We saw some of the greatest challenges to disentanglement in chapters 4 and 5, as well as some of the aspects that turned out to be less challenging. As I will discuss further below, achieving economic and social upgrade has in both case studies been less difficult than might be expected. Both cases have in common the achievement of increased incomes for the Southern supplier company – though they have achieved this in contrasting ways. Café Libertad is able to pay the Zapatistas a markedly higher and more stable price for their coffee than most coffee traders pay in conventional markets. The Zapatistas get 'better paid for the same product' (Bolwig et al 2010: 177) thanks to the fact that the Zapatistas are internationally recognised and respected in leftist circles, that customers in Europe are willing to pay a slightly higher price for this coffee than for a conventional product, and the fact that Café Libertad and its staff are willing to earn less than a conventional coffee trading company.

Turqle, similarly, pays its suppliers a higher price than conventional traders. The most significant share of this increase, however, stems from the functional, process and product upgrade Turqle has supported its suppliers to achieve – and in some cases the ability to export any produce at all. Turqle has supported both Bomvu and Luhlaza in acquiring the productive capability to export shelf-ready produce to Europe, to find well-paying buyers in Europe, and to mechanise and upscale production (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). (It should be noted that Bomvu had reverted to exporting bulk materials at the time of my fieldwork since this was more profitable in the short term, in what GVC analysts would call 'upgrade as downgrade', see Ponte and Ewert 2009). By contrast, the Zapatistas still export green and unprocessed coffee beans to Café Libertad, an arrangement that is not set to change. Everyone I spoke to at Café Libertad stated that there are no plans to shift coffee roasting and packaging to Chiapas since the logistical obstacles would be too great (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; see chapter 4).

What GVC analysts call social upgrade has also been achieved in both case studies but in

different ways, as we saw in the previous chapter. Though Turqle is forced to accept Bomvu and Luhlaza's capitalist foundations, it has successfully pushed for an increase in wages – which are now at or rising towards the living wage – and for worker representation in the company (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). It is as a result of working with capitalist companies that Turqle must pay particular attention to 'social' issues such as these: in the case of the Zapatistas the money earned by co-operatives and farms is for the most part automatically distributed to workers and the communities of which they are a part since no capitalist distinction between owner and workers exists – though gender inequalities and the occasional use of casual farm labourers remain caveats to this collectivism (Millán 1998; see chapters 4 and 6).

A great challenge in both case studies has been voice upgrade. In both cases it has proven extremely difficult to set up a functional two-way dialogue between the supplier and the importer-trader to discuss anything beyond the most necessary business arrangements. In the case of the Zapatistas and Café Libertad we have seen a lack of conversations across the two organisations about value, while in Turqle's case we have seen the lack of worker input into the running of the Fair Trade Trust. The reasons for this difficulty of establishing a deeper dialogue may be similar in both cases. Firstly, the supplier lacks resources to dialogue. The Zapatistas have limited access to email and phone, and only certain members of both Café Libertad and the Zapatistas speak the mutual language, Spanish. Added to this, the Zapatistas have only limited time to spend on conversations with Café Libertad since the latter is only one of many organisations to which it sells coffee. Had there been more resources in Zapatista coffee co-operatives, there might have been more staff time dedicated to such dialogue. When it comes to Turqle's suppliers, and particularly the factory workers, they could be said to lack some of the resources needed to take charge of promoting their own interests in the organisational infrastructure Turqle has instituted, or to institute their own.

Secondly, and intimately linked to the previous point, there are different norms and assumptions regarding correct communication and conduct across the North/South divide. While Café Libertad expects or needs frequent and to-the-point communication that also leaves room for personal greetings, as well as a universal respect for pre-arranged timings, the Zapatistas appear to need or expect the flexibility to alter previous agreements, and a sparsity in contact. In the second case study, Turqle requires its participants to use a formal and traceable genre of communication (with official meetings, minutes, forms, etc), in which many factory workers are not highly trained. Many of these requirements originate not from Turqle, but from European import regulations and fair trade retailers who demand certain traceability and formal evidence that the trading process is 'fair' (Linda in interview 11 September 2013).

Thirdly, in both cases the supplier lacks an incentive or interest to engage in dialogue. As we saw in the previous chapter, Turqle dominates its supply chains in the sense that it has instigated the relationships, defined the aims as well as the means, and set the categories of identity. As a result, there is little incentive for workers to participate in decision-making as the range of possible outcomes has already been narrowed and does not include the type of outcomes workers may seek in the immediate term. The workers' disinterest in attending Trust meetings and training can thus be interpreted as a case of everyday resistance or exit. Non-attendance at meetings and lacklustre participation in training could be seen as a form of resistance. The reason why the Zapatistas lack an incentive to engage in dialogue with Café Libertad, meanwhile, appears in a sense the exact opposite: Café Libertad is only one of a vast range of traders who buy coffee from the Zapatistas, meaning its importance for the latter is limited. At the same time, however, Zapatista farmers struggle against poverty and violent attacks from the Mexican state while Café Libertad members are relatively affluent and safe by global standards. The lack of engagement by Zapatista farmers might, thus, also be a form of everyday resistance.

7-2.2 Within Organisations

As well as a lack of dialogue between organisations, a major obstacle to disentanglement is the unequal inclusion of everybody's voices *within* the organisations, and the reaching of mutually agreed decisions. The organisational design is different in all the organisations we have looked at. As we saw in chapter 4, the Zapatistas are organised as large-scale participatory democracies on a community-wide level; as large secondary co-operatives (that is, as co-operatives whose members are organisations rather than individuals) when it comes to coffee trading; and as families on the level of the individual farm. Gender divisions remain a particular obstacle to everybody's equal say in these decision-making structures (Millán 1998). Café Libertad is also collectively organised – it is more similar in organisational form to a Zapatista coffee co-operative but more similar in size to a Zapatista coffee farm. When I asked Café Libertad members about the main difficulty they face, they emphasised internal decision-making (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012). Stephan, Folkert and Michael all emphasised that internal democracy and conflicts within the collective is the main type of challenge in their job – but also an expected and inevitable one. Balancing the insight of more experienced members with the desire to include everybody regardless of how assertive their personal identities allow them to be is very difficult. When things go well, members feel a great sense of satisfaction and joy at working for an inclusive collective, but when things go badly relations in the collective

suffer, and at their worst such disagreements can lead to organisational splits (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012).

Turqle, meanwhile, has a more disintegrated organisational structure than Café Libertad, whereby the four members hold authority over their own area. In theory all four member are equal, but since Rain and Pieter founded the organisation, and therefore have more experience, they informally have more say. As Sarah put it: 'I think Rain and Pieter are the driving force – without them it wouldn't… I mean, obviously I would pick up as best I could, but no, they are the driving force behind it '(Sarah in interview 17 September 2013). This is neither surprising nor secret, but rather typical of collectives and co-operatives (Block and Rosenberg 2002). By much greater contrast, finally, Luhlaza and Bomvu are capitalist companies with explicitly hierarchical organisational structures that exclude the workers from decision-making at the outset. At Turqle's insistence both companies have workers' committees, but since these exist as an 'add-on' to each company's formal capitalist structure the workers' influence is very limited.

7-2.3 The Limits of Formal Rules

Our understanding of the difficulty to achieve equal relations within organisations can be enriched by Deborah Gould's analysis of what she calls the 'affective dimensions' of conflict in social movements. Gould points out that social movement activists, like any other humans, are rational actors at the same time as also being motivated by non-rational, affective, factors (Gould 2004: 161). People do not always act according to reason, and they are not always reasonable. Gould critiques prefigurative movements for being prone to assuming that formal rules are enough to change people's behaviour (2009). Applied to prefigurative trading, her argument implies that there are limits to how effective a formal institutional arrangement can be that assumes exclusively logical participants. In other words, creating an organisation that reflects egalitarian ideals can not consist exclusively of writing policy documents or lists of rules for members to follow. It must also include continued training, reflective practice, discussion, and mutual care. Applied to decision-making, this necessitates meeting structures and facilitation tools that address affects, which might include what facilitation practitioners call vibes-watching, active listening and go-rounds (Seeds for Change 2009).

We can view humans as partly thinking and partly feeling creatures – in both cases deliberate and active reproduction of disentanglement is more likely to lead to egalitarian outcomes than leaving things to convention. Being raised in and surrounded by the matrix of power, most of us carry patriarchal, colonial and capitalist assumptions and habits that do not simply disappear when we enter the offices of an egalitarian co-

operative (e.g. Boal 1990). In addition, constantly relating to laws, regulations, contractors, suppliers, bankers and bureaucrats who are not prefiguring egalitarian relations requires active enforcement of prefigurative principles. In other words, disentanglement needs to occur not only once at the formal foundation of an organisation, but must be recreated as much as possible on a daily basis (Butler 1990). This involves not only formal arrangements but also affective ones (Gould 2009). The amount of successful prefiguration that Turqle, Bomvu, Luhlaza, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad achieve varies from moment to moment and from aspect to aspect.

7-3. THE CHALLENGE OF REMAINING ENTANGLED

7-3.1 Money

Many allege that it is difficult or impossible for non-capitalist companies to survive in a capitalist context (see e.g. arguments cited and refuted in Gibson-Graham 2006b: 108-109). Sharzer (2012) argues that co-operatives by necessity are unable to compete against capitalist companies since the former do not benefit from the inhumane attitude towards wages that allows capitalist companies to cut their prices. Since capitalist companies always pay workers the lowest wage possible, i.e. compensate for their socially necessary abstract labour time in a free labour market, their prices will always be the cheapest according to Sharzer (Ibid. p. 133). One problem with this line of reasoning is the fact that the setting of wages is in reality more complex than this. For example, government subsidies, benefits and working tax credits allow many companies – capitalist and non-capitalist – to pay workers far below the lowest sustainable wage, or even nothing at all (Cox/Citizens UK 2015). More importantly, wages are determined not only by the cost necessary to reproduce a worker's life or by supply and demand, but by labour market norms, expectations, trends and fashions. To take an example, the average wage for a web developer in Germany is approximately €33,850 per year (Payscale 2015). A large share of this money is in excess of what it costs a web developer to survive and reproduce their own labour power. A web developer, thus, can choose to take a job that pays anything as little as the living wage (or less if relevant government subsidies exist).

This is no mere flight of fancy: a web developer at Café Libertad – of which there were at least two at the time of my fieldwork – earns a maximum of €18 per hour for a maximum of 6 hours per day, i.e. a maximum of around €28,000 per year provided they work full time. This is the flat wage rate at Café Libertad for all its workers. In other words, members of non-profit co-operatives can choose to work for a significantly lower wage than they might have earned in a capitalist company, because there are factors other

than monetary ones that motivate them. This is something that is prevalent in both Café Libertad and Turqle: everybody that I interviewed at both organisations stated that they earn less than they would be able to earn in a conventional company, but that the satisfaction of being part of a prefigurative collective far outweighed the financial loss . Non-profit co-operatives, then, have an extremely lucrative advantage over capitalist companies. When it comes to the Zapatistas and workers at Bomvu and Luhlaza, they receive above conventional market prices and wages for their work as a result of selling to the non- or anticapitalist companies Turqle and Café Libertad.

In addition, non-profit companies such as Turqle and Café Libertad are able to offer lower prices since they do not need to – indeed, cannot – add a profit margin. After paying their wages and input costs, the expenditures of a non-profit company are covered, but capitalist companies must add a profit margin to the final price to pay its owners or investors a profit that is as high as possible. Some sceptics, including Sharzer, see this profit margin as a necessary cost since it is what provides investors with an incentive to invest in a company (2012: 133). The assumption, again, is that making money is what necessarily motivates people in life. While it is undeniably true that many financial decisions in the world today are primarily motivated by making money, it is also true that a significant portion of financial decisions are not. For example, 55% of the British population give away money to charity every month (NCVO 2014). Even more money is given and shared informally between friends and family members (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 61). Millions of pounds are invested in 'ethical' banks that offer lower rates of return than conventional ones (Move Your Money 2015). Though for-profit economic relations dominate global economies, it is not accurate to say that the current situation is the only possible one.

Though both Café Libertad and Turqle are co-operatives in which staff members work for a lower wage than they would have been able to earn in a conventional company, the two differ slightly in their pricing rationale. Both charge prices for their produce that lie above the cheapest supermarket value ranges. A 250g pack of ground Zapatista coffee imported by Café Libertad retails at £3.75 in London, i.e. 1.5 pence per gram (Active Distribution 2015), whereas conventional non-fair trade and non-organic Tesco own-brand coffee costs around 0.97 pence per gram, or £2.20 for 227g, at the time of writing (Tesco 2015a). Branded coffees such as Lavazza and Douwe Egberts cost anywhere from 1.4 to 2.6 pence per gram at the country's largest supermarket Tesco. In other words, Café Libertad Zapatista coffee costs a little more than supermarket own-brand coffee, but decidedly less than non-fair trade and non-organic high-end mainstream supermarket coffee brands. The products Turqle trade in are more difficult to compare to conventional products since spice blends, sauces, chutneys etc vary to such a degree in

price and quality, but while a bottle of Turqle's Ukuva hot chilli sauce costs £4.49 per 240ml plus postage in UK internet shop The Savannah (2015), a comparable yet non-fair trade and non-organic bottle in Tesco costs half than that or less (Tesco 2015b). As we saw in previous chapters, Café Libertad members expressed an active commitment to ensuring their prices stay low enough to allow non-affluent consumers to buy Zapatista coffee (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012). Turqle members did not express such a view explicitly. The concerns they expressed in interviews revolved around getting the price as high as possible, though they also stressed the importance of keeping prices competitive (Pieter in interview 11 September 2013; Rain in interview 11 September 2013; Linda in interview 11 September 2013). We might interpret these two pricing rationales as two equally valid approaches to solidarity with the poor: Café Libertad aim to help the poor by making products affordable in Europe yet paying decent prices to producers in Chiapas. Turqle, meanwhile, aim to help the poor by selling products to more affluent consumers in Europe for a price that is as high as possible, in order to redistribute money to poor producers in South Africa.

Given the financial crisis of recent years, it might be expected that Turqle and Café Libertad, as sellers of products that do not primarily prioritise cheapness, would encounter hardship. While Turqle reported some slowing of sales in certain products, however, both organisations have survived rather well despite global financial turmoil. When I asked whether selling premium-priced produce was difficult, both Café Libertad and Turqle staff responded that the political or 'ethical' dimension of their products more than compensates for the higher price (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012; Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013; Linda in interview 11 Sept 2013). Here too, it turns out that many are willing to prioritise non-monetary goods over money. Furthermore, the market for political or 'ethical' goods does not only appeal to a privileged minority of consumers – at least in principle. As Matt Wilson points out, it is not necessarily the case that only rich people can afford to buy these kinds of products (Wilson 2014). Though 'ethical consuming' is sometimes caricatured as a depoliticised and expensive luxury pastime for the petty bourgeoisie (Sharzer 2012), Wilson points out that radical prefigurative consuming usually includes consuming less in general, thereby allowing for greater expenditures on individual products. In other words, the politically motivated customer may buy a bottle of Turqle chilli sauce, and omit buying a packet of crisps or a new mobile phone, to compensate both financially and environmentally. These considerations must remain speculative for the time being since no studies exist that map the demographics of either Turqle's or Café Libertad's customer bases (Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013; Linda in interview 11 Sept 2013; Folkert in interview 11

Nov 2012).

Like attracting customers, attracting finance and credit from banks has proven highly possible despite the broader economic downturn, at least for the Northern partners in these value chains. Café Libertad banks with a 'green' bank that specialises on supplying firms that avoid harming the environment (Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Café Libertad fits into this remit since most of their coffee is grown using organic methods. Perhaps surprisingly, the one-sided A4 contract that Café Libertad signs with the Zapatistas each year is sufficient security for the bank to issue credit to cover the pre-payment of 60% of the total price (Ibid.). The bank holds the coffee as security on this credit, meaning that the bank would gain ownership of the coffee should Café Libertad default on its loans. Thanks to keeping buffer funds, made possible by its gradual growth since its inception in 1999, Café Libertad has not defaulted on its loans to date, even when coffee deliveries from the Zapatistas have been several months late (Ibid.).

Turqle, similarly, is able to gain credit at workable rates from its bank in Cape Town. Pieter stated in an interview that a good personal relationship with Turqle's bank manager is key to gaining access to decent credit deals and currency exchange rates:

> We were very fortunate. The very first bank manager we had when we started the company was very sympathetic to what we were doing, intrigued with what we were doing. I would pick up the phone and say to her 'we need [to borrow] two hundred thousand rand for three weeks' time, we have these orders that are in, can I fax them through to you?', and she would look and say 'yes it's a legitimate order, fine' - ten minutes later the money is in [our] bank [account]. [...] Fortunately, I suppose, we've not had to go and borrow money to build a new facility or things like that, which I suppose would be a bit different. Other than having a mortgage on [our office] property, which was done six years ago, and a relatively small overdraft facility, we don't necessarily need [much from the bank].
> (Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013)

Since both Café Libertad and Turqle started very small, gaining initial funds to start these businesses was possible without taking any large bank loans or relying on external investors. Folkert used his personal savings of 8,000 marks (approximately 2,700 GBP at the time) to start Café Libertad in 1999 (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Gerrit in interview 9 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). Rain and Pieter started Turqle from Rain's living room using their personal savings, and grew gradually each year (Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013). In the beginning the founders of both organisations worked many hours unpaid with an insecure income, but starting small meant that nobody had to take any large financial risks. Café Libertad has later opened for external

investors to lend money to the collective (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012). At the time of my fieldwork there were three such individual investors. They receive an annual interest rate of 3.5% on their investment, but they do not have any say in the collective's decision-making (Ibid.). This mechanism can thus be likened to a type of bank loan, but one that bypasses the bank.

As a Southern producer, the Zapatistas face chronic poverty, so financial survival is significantly more difficult for them than for Café Libertad and Turqle. As for banking and credit, the Zapatistas have created two banks that handle its community's money and give out loans, in an attempt to decrease and eventually end the need to use conventional banks. The *Banco Popular Autónomo Zapatista* (BANPAZ) was created in 2008, and the *Banco Autónomo de las Mujeres Autoridades Zapatistas* (BANAMAZ) was created later to provide more specifically for women's projects (Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 2013; Latin America Herald Tribune quoted in Glasgow Chiapas Solidarity Group 2011). BANPAZ handles all money made and spent by the coffee co-operatives, as well as many other business activities of the Zapatistas (Thinkmexican 2014). This bank gives loans to Zapatista community members at favourable rates – for example, a 2 per cent rate of interest is charged for loans with a repayment period of up to six months, and those who have difficulty repaying can renegotiate this for a longer period (Ibid.; EZLN 2013a). The money for this bank comes not only from coffee exports but also from sales of other Zapatista products locally and globally, and from the 'taxes' the Juntas impose on community members (Subcomandante Moisés/EZLN 2015). As the Zapatistas are very poor by global standards, the funds of the Zapatista banks are also very limited. Though BANPAZ attempts to offer short term loans to any Zapatista in need, many coffee farmers still feel forced to sell to coyotes as we saw in chapter 4 (see also Mariposa 2009). The demand for Zapatista coffee is great across the world and it is therefore easy to find a buyer – but as we saw in chapter 4, selling to an organisation such as Café Libertad, which offers a higher and more stable price as well as an added support fund premium and political solidarity support, requires the ability to wait for funds to clear.

7-3.2 Bureaucracy

A different type of challenge to the existence of these prefigurative organisations is not financial but bureaucratic. Since both case studies deal in food products there are certain hygienic standards that must be adhered to. Turqle spends significant resources on quality management and compliance with health and safety standards. One of Turqle's four staff roles, staffed by Linda, is almost entirely dedicated to these concerns. Linda helps Turqle's suppliers gain formal accreditation for the numerous food safety standards that are required by the EU, as well as those required nationally in South

Africa. She also makes regular visits to the suppliers to inspect their practices and to ensure that standards are adhered to. Gaining accreditation for internationally recognised standards such as HACCP and the ISO series requires not only significant investment into physical infrastructure (compliant walls and ceilings, separate storage and handling facilities for different products, foot- and hand-washing facilities, air conditioning, etc), but also staff training. Gaining accreditation and maintaining proven compliance is very costly for both Turqle and its suppliers (Linda in interview 11 Sept 2013). This is not perceived by anybody I interviewed as a problem but as a fact of life when trading in the food industry. What Linda expressed concern with, however, is the lack of standardisation of these accreditations across countries and regions:

> The whole thing with ISO22,000 was that this was gonna be the be-all and end-all and it was gonna encompass everything and everybody would accept it. And that, unfortunately, is not the case. Britain still wants the BRC [British Retail Consortium certification]. […] Yes now Europe seems to fancy ISO22,000 but there are other ones as well. Locally, if you supply to [South African supermarket] Woolworths you get the Woolworths audit, and there are 3 of those! […] And you pay for all of those audits, it's not like they come out and do them for free. So the point remains is that, I'm sorry, where is one food standard safety audit that should encompass everything and everybody should accept it? There is none.
> (Ibid.)

When it comes to coffee, standards such as ISO or HACCP are not legal requirements when importing into the EU, but importers often comply with them voluntarily (International Trade Centre 2011). The Zapatistas' coffee has a CERTIMEX organic certification which already includes certain food safety standards. As both Folkert and Stephan expressed in their interviews, being certified organic is financially (as well as politically) worthwhile since many consumers of this coffee explicitly seek organic produce.

Overall, thus, surviving or achieving entanglement is not as challenging as achieving some level of disentanglement. Though this is unsurprising as a general statement, we have found that economic survival is less difficult than some commentators have predicted. Bureaucratic survival, furthermore, is costly but far from insurmountable.

7-4. THE IMPACT OF (DIS)ENTANGLEMENT

We are seeing that being a successful tool for equalising trade relations is something complex and variable: success exists somewhere in the tension between entanglement

and disentanglement. There is another important consideration when it comes to the success of prefigurative trading projects we must address: what kind of impact can and do these organisations aim to achieve through their prefigurative trading? We have seen that disentanglement is challenging for prefigurativists, but is it also a challenge to the matrix of power? I have been reading my case studies as examples of prefigurative egalitarian trade: as a social movement strategy, the purpose of prefigurativism is to voice grievances and concerns in society and to bring about some form of meaningful social change to address or remedy them (Snow et al 2004: 3). Does this disentanglement, then, have an influence on, or relevance to, the rest of society? In this section I consider the significance, impact and scope of our case studies' prefigurative trading. I argue that the scope of radical prefigurative trade, given a capillary view of power, is more limited than the scope of more conventional political activist tactics on the radical Left, which use what Richard Day has called the logic of hegemony and rely on a centralising and universalising interpretation of power (Day 2005, 2007). Furthermore, I elaborate on the argument that entanglement should be understood not only as a limit of prefigurativism, but also as a strength.

7-4.1 Yourself, Together

As I have hinted in previous chapters, a feature of radical egalitarian prefigurativism that is distinctive is its rejection of the idea that a vanguard or elite can liberate the masses on the latter's behalf. This has led some critics to interpret radical prefigurative politics as insular or averse to group solidarity (Thompson 2006; Sharzer 2012). I will show in this section that such critiques are built on a misunderstanding of the prefigurative logic.

Café Libertad, Turqle and the Zapatistas all express aims that go beyond the own organisation and extend to broader society. For example, Café Libertad states on its website that it 'aims at a solidarity[-based] and liberated society' (Café Libertad 2015). Turqle stated in an email interview that it aims in the long run for 'healthy communities, strong families and resilient individuals' across South Africa. The Zapatistas describe their ultimate aims in countless communiqués, for example, they dream of a world where 'peace, justice and liberty [a]re so common that no one talk[s] about them as far off concepts' (Subcomandante Marcos/EZLN 1994). What the exact long-term or utopian aims of these organisations are is difficult to pin down as none of them have dedicated policy statements on the matter – nor are they required to. Importantly, however, all of them have ambitions or dreams that reach beyond their own membership.

Solidarity is a value that in a radical left context usually includes the idea that those who are better off or better resourced should help those who are less well off (hooks 1986:

138). Many Leftist social movements are famously built on the idea that a vanguard or a revolutionary class would liberate all other oppressed people on their behalf, taking the lead for others, motivated by a consciousness of oppression (e.g. Marx and Engels 2015 [1848]: ch 2; Sharzer 2012). Since many oppressed people, so the logic goes, are too poor, overworked, uneducated or lacking in political consciousness to liberate themselves, the task falls upon a politicised radical elite to bring about social change for everybody through a revolution. Yet prefigurative trade is not in the first instance intended to create radical social change for everybody or at once. If we take the capillary view of power, radical social change is not something that an elite group of activists can deliver to the rest of the population. When acting within the logic of prefigurative trading, thus, Café Libertad, the Zapatistas and Turqle are not extending a helping hand to the rest of humanity in any direct sense. Perhaps paradoxically to some, they are motivated by solidarity and express a desire for all of society to be egalitarian, but they are not seeking to change the entire world through their prefigurative activities.

Some commentators imply that the lack of ambition in prefigurative strategies to liberate all fellow oppressed people amounts to a betrayal of the solidarity that the Left is built upon (see e.g. Thompson 2006). Greg Sharzer alleges that prefigurative (or as he terms it, 'localist') activism amounts to mere petty-bourgeois self-help since it does not seek universal revolution (Sharzer 2012: 87-93, ch4). This critique, however, is based on a view of power that is not capillary. The capillary view of power does not render possible a political division of labour between a vanguard and the masses in creating radical social change; empowerment is not a service that an enlightened elite can provide to the rest of the population (Day 2005). Since power exists not only in formal institutions or in centres such as the government, but is enacted by all of us all the time, it is not possible to create radical change on somebody else's behalf (Landauer 1978 [1911]: 138-9). Radical change *must* therefore be 'self-serving' in the sense that fully liberating somebody else is impossible. The prefigurative trade that Turqle, Café Libertad and the Zapatistas carry out is not designed to directly attack any centralised bastion of power or to directly liberate anybody other than the individuals involved.

My argument here resonates with the argument I made in chapter 6 regarding the need for voice upgrade. In that chapter I argued that the political nature of value – that is, of questions concerning how production should be organised and for what purpose, and how resources should be distributed – renders any notion of a universally correct view of value impossible. Voice upgrade would be a tool for facilitating political discussions and struggles over the meaning(s) of value. Here, meanwhile, I am similarly arguing that the lack of a universal underlying monologic of power renders political action on another's behalf impossible. Both lines of reasoning derive from a pluriversal ontological

interpretation of power, and both necessitate the political involvement of all stakeholders.

As we saw in chapter 3, a capillary interpretation of power does not deny that power is unequally distributed in society or that certain hubs of power exist. As Day points out, most societies are today governed by a hegemon, for example the state and an interconnected web of corporations (Day 2007). This concentration of power, however, does not in the capillary view amount to a total or universal centralisation: if a hegemon is overthrown some social change is likely to follow, but this change could never be radical since the hegemon's influence is limited (Foucault 1983). Day stresses another point in addition to this: though today's societies are dominated by hegemonic forces, a radically egalitarian society would not be. Furthermore, since all political actions are prefigurative, it is impossible to achieve a non-hegemonistic society through hegemonistic means (2005).

That all actions are prefigurative may seem a drastic claim, but it follows from the capillary view of power (Maeckelbergh 2011; Yates 2015). In the capillary view, the social relations that we enact each day *are* the existing social relations; there is not some hidden or definite (as opposed to 'fantastical' or 'apparent') underlying social logic that determines or strongly-influences all other social relations (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 239-240). This assumption is what has led prefigurativists to argue that political means and ends not only *should* be linked, but *are* linked. In other words, all actions (including thoughts and speech) are already in this sense prefigurative, because all actions constitute society (Maeckelbergh 2011; Yates 2015; Dixon 2009; Holloway 2002).

As should already be clear, this is not to argue that everybody is free to engage in any type of action they like. Butler points out that power being performa*tive* is not the same as saying it is perform*ed*: behaviours and relations congeal over time and exist 'within a highly rigid regulatory frame' so that they cease being free choices that we can opt into or out of in our everyday lives (Butler 1990: 33; Salih 2002). All actors are restricted by regulatory factors such as beliefs, language, norms, the likelihood of violent responses from others or from the state when common practices and laws are broken, etc. Nevertheless, society in this view is constituted by actions and is in a perennial state of becoming, rather than being.

What Day highlights, thus, is that only non-hegemonising actions can achieve non-hegemonising outcomes. Any activism advocating social relations that would be *entirely* free from the domination of one group by another (including the domination of the masses by the state and its corporate allies) must in this view organise without

deploying domineering logics or institutions (Day 2005).

Café Libertad and the Zapatistas align themselves with ideologies that might be described as non-hegemonising – though neither of the two are orthodox to any single ideology or political thinker. The Zapatistas are often described by journalists and activists as 'anarchist', but most scholars who research them in depth reject the imposition of such a category (e.g. Krøvel 2010; Holloway 1998; King and Villanueva 1998, Subcomandante Marcos interviewed in Autonomedia 1994: 296). Instead their aims should be described as more eclectic, and more politically situated in contemporary Chiapas. There is an often cited communiqué from the EZLN stating:

> Zapatismo is not a new political ideology or a rehash of old ideologies. Zapatismo is nothing, it doesn't exist. It only serves as a bridge, to cross from one side to the other. […] There are no universal recipes, lines, strategies, tactics, laws, rules or slogans. There is only a desire: to build a better world, that is, a new world.
> (EZLN cited in Ryan 2011: 49).

Another frequent quotation is the Zapatista slogan '*Para todos todo*' – everything for everyone – which should be interpreted as a radical form of egalitarianism. John Holloway has claimed that the ultimate aim of the Zapatistas actually revolves around achieving dignity for all, 'the refusal to accept humiliation and dehumanisation' (Holloway 1998: 160). If we listen to the EZLN and the multifarious voices coming out of Zapatista communities through reports, articles and videos, however, the aims appear more diverse, and seem to refuse simplification.

Nevertheless, the Zapatistas are clear that their aim is not to overthrow the Mexican government or to bring about any universal revolution (EZLN 2003). As a rejection of hegemonism the Zapatistas do not seek to convert others outside of their geographical area to join their organisation, or to liberate others on their behalf. Subcomandante Marcos made his disdain of vanguardist liberation evident in an open letter in 2003, stating: 'I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet' (Ibid.). We have already mapped the logic behind this position: egalitarianism precludes the domination by a hegemon; power is capillary; thus a society without a hegemon can only be obtained through non-hegemonising means (Day 2005). The Zapatistas instead encourage supporters to 'be a Zapatista wherever you are', in other words to wage their own political struggles in their own contexts (see e.g. Flesher Fominaya 2014: 73; Gallego 2011: 173).

Café Libertad, meanwhile, does use the term anarchist to describe itself, more

specifically 'anarcho-syndicalist' (Café Libertad 2015). When I asked whether there is any particular academic or political theory that influences Café Libertad, Folkert responded by quoting several authors of political theory, including Rudolf Rocker and Diego Abad Santillán (email interview 24 June 2012). However, all Café Libertad members I interviewed stated that they frequently disagree about details of political aims and values, so this organisations' ultimate aims should also be understood as complex and shifting.

Café Libertad has taken the Zapatistas' message to 'be a Zapatista wherever you are' to heart, organising locally in Germany as a collective that, firstly, prefigures non-capitalist forms of business in its local context, secondly, prefigures decolonial trading relations globally, and thirdly, that informs and lobbies the general public on a wide range of political issues in Hamburg. In an interview Michael explained that Café Libertad's aim is not to unite its own organisation with the Zapatistas or to make the two identical; rather it is to struggle in solidarity, i.e. in mutual aid, for a pluriversal world:

> Michael: It's not like Café Libertad and the Zapatistas have the same interests. But it's important to look at where the interests are different. And I don't think it's good to come to a point where we have the same [identical] interests as them – a different world is what we [both] fight for. [...]
> Sofa: So you don't want to make Chiapas like Hamburg.
> Michael: No [laughs] we don't want to do this. It's not possible I think, and it's not necessary. The Zapatistas work for, '[a world in which many worlds fit]' I think they call it, and that's a good idea.
> (Author interview 12 Nov 2012)

The position of Turqle, meanwhile, is more complex and difficult to pin down. In interviews Turqle staff frequently mentioned that they did not want to 'politicise' the discussion or get onto political topics. Rather, they sought to distance themselves from the notion of being political. For example, when I asked Pieter why Turqle had chosen prefigurativism rather than demand-based political lobbying as a strategy for fighting unemployment, he responded, laughing: 'we are not politicians. We look at what are our strengths. What can we do with those. And our strengths were product development [and trade]' (Pieter in interview 11 Sept 2013). It is difficult to connect Turqle to any particular ideology or organised strand of political thought; rather than align itself with any specific political movement, it presents itself as an expert organisation desiring to improve the lot of South Africa's employed and unemployed workers. Its ultimate aims are therefore not discussed as clearly or visibly as they might have been.

Some of the communications of Turqle show that its activities overall are influenced and informed both by hegemonising and non-hegemonising logics. This is testament to the fact that real-life actors can mix and blend political logics in a way that might seem contradictory in theory. Indeed, theorists are highly aware of and hardly surprised by this: for example, Richard Day goes to some length to highlight that his argument concerns different logics rather than lived practices (Day 2007). Andrew Cornell goes even further, emphasising the pragmatic appeal of purposely blending prefiguration with traditional mass-liberatory tactics (2011). In some of its activities Turqle is aiming to help, and perhaps even 'liberate', South African people as a whole. For example, in a briefing document it presented to Oxfam Belgium in 2012, Turqle measures its success on a national scale, noting: '[W]hat is the impact of what we do? Looking at the national statistics – sadly, apparently nothing at all. Since 2003 the unemployment situation in the country has been worsening steadily' (document obtained through email interview 23 Oct 2012). At the same time, several members of Turqle, as well as an owner-manager of one of its suppliers, expressed in their interviews the idea that one person cannot liberate another on their behalf, but that this work needs to be done by each person. One particular idiom occurred repeatedly in separate interviews: 'You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink'. What this means is that Turqle operates according to *both* the logics of hegemonism *and* non-hegemonism (Day 2005).

As well as noting that actually existing prefigurative traders do not always consistently adhere to theoretical ideas, we can see that the prefigurative activities of Turqle, Café Libertad and the Zapatistas, logically, work against hegemonism and accompanying notions of a universal revolution. A further clarification regarding the Zapatistas, Café Libertad and hegemonising activism would be appropriate here. I would argue that Richard Day's argument creates too strong a connection between his 'logic of hegemony' (i.e. the reinforcement of the dominant power of large or centralised organisations) and his 'politics of demand' on the one hand, and what he calls the 'logic of affinity' and the 'politics of the act' on the other (2005). This makes Day easily misread by critics as denouncing all types of politics of demand, given that he expresses a blanket denunciation of the logic of hegemony (e.g. Thompson 2006). In my reading of Day, however, some types of politics of demand are compatible with a logic of affinity and have nothing to do with the logic of hegemony.

In attempting to maintain its hegemony, the state will often impede the work of prefigurative activists through, for example, making it illegal or shutting it down, as many squatters and anarchist social centres have experienced (Squatting Europe Kollective 2013) – or even waging civil conflict against it, as in the case of the Zapatistas. In these situations, prefigurative activists must defend themselves, which I argue does

not force them to abandon their ontological or strategic logics. Rather, a defence against government interference – even if such a defence includes protests and lobbying that makes demands of the state – amounts to a rejection of hegemony. The distinction between politics of the act and politics of demand here becomes somewhat blurred, but it is nevertheless clear that a demand of the state to *stay out* of something, cannot be interpreted as an attempt on behalf of the activists to establish any kind of new hegemony. There are thus many conceivable acts of politics of demand that would not fall under Day's logic of hegemony.

The Zapatistas occasionally engage in protests that are aimed at the government but that cannot be described as hegemonising. For example, in 2012 tens of thousands of Zapatistas gathered in cities across Chiapas to protest against the Mexican government's continued violent and repressive behaviour, and for Zapatista autonomy (EZLN 2013b). According to Inclán, the Zapatistas made a decision in 2003 to cease their efforts to affect the Mexican government in their favour and instead 'decided to focus their organizational efforts on creating their own structures of autonomous authority' (2008: 1345).

Café Libertad, meanwhile, supports and encourages certain protests in Hamburg as well as internationally, some of which are hegemonising in the strictest sense, for example opposing welfare cuts or advocating greater government support for refugees (Café Libertad 2015; Michael in interview 12 Nov 2012). These political demands are seen as 'hegemonising' in Day's terminology because they request the nation-state to intervene and exert its influence on its entire population – the nation-state being a pseudo-democratic institution that imposes its laws, norms and culture on all its citizens and residents without the necessity for consent or democratic involvement from the latter (Day 2005). For an anarchist and anti-authoritarian such as Day, the hegemonising nature of the nation-state is ultimately undesirable, even if some of its provisions are lesser evils in the short term (Day 2007).

> States – whether they be liberal, leninist, workerist, or whatever – have proven to be very poor solutions to the problems of social organization they set out to address, because although they sometimes do a bit of 'good', they always – and increasingly, in the societies of 'anti-terrorist' control – end up perpetuating domination and exploitation. (Ibid.)

In Day's critique of hegemonism, nation-states doing 'a bit of "good"' – for example, providing welfare or granting asylum to refugees – is more desirable than neoliberal welfare cuts or more tightly controlled borders, but not as desirable or conducive to a

just society as the abolition of the nation-state and the introduction instead of a participatory democratic, disentangled and egalitarian polity.

Café Libertad does advertise and express support for hegemonising protests, and also donates coffee beans or proceeds from coffee sales to them (Ibid; Folkert in interview 8 Nov 2012). Strictly speaking this means that Café Libertad at times deploys the logic of hegemonism as well as non-hegemonism, though it would be inaccurate to describe this occasional hegemonism as anywhere near central to their work.

For the most part, then, all three of these case study organisations operate non-hegemonically using Day's terminology. Importantly, however, this does not mean that they have given up on solidarity within and between oppressed groups.

7-4.2 Dilution or Irrelevance?

There is a further response to the critique that prefigurativism would be selfish and introverted. As I take great pains to show in this thesis, it is (which some might find ironic) *almost impossible* to engage in prefigurativism without affecting others in society. Almost everything we do is connected to and influential upon others. Another way of phrasing this is that it is almost impossible to disentangle from the colonial matrix of power, i.e. to prefigure something purely egalitarian (see chapters 4 and 5). To be completely removed from the rest of society would require moving to an empty plot of land and disconnecting entirely from economic, infrastructural, cultural and interpersonal relations, which is an option available and desirable to almost nobody. Any prefigurative activist is thus highly likely to be seen by others, to inform others, to question others, to inspire others, and to direct money towards certain people and organisations (Cornell 2011).

The near-impossibility of existing entirely outside of society draws attention to a seemingly damning tension in prefigurative politics: either prefigurativism is so integrated into the colonial matrix that it becomes diluted (i.e. it fails to be fully prefigurative through remaining entangled with the matrix), or it is so *dis*-integrated from it that it becomes politically irrelevant (i.e. it disentangles from the matrix so successfully that it ceases to affect and challenge it altogether). Either prefigurativism is diluted, or it is irrelevant. How do we carry on defending prefigurative politics despite this tension? As I have already pointed out, and as the previous chapters evidence, the second scenario – irrelevance – is so unlikely in practice that the tension is already resolved, or never actually appears.

In theory it would also be possible to imagine a third scenario; one in which prefigurative activists disentangle from the colonial matrix altogether yet continue to be known to and reported upon by the rest of society, thereby acting as an inspiration and source of information about other possible ways of living. We know that this kind of scenario is possible because it has already occurred in remotely similar situations, namely in anthropological reports in Western academia of non-modern societies and indigenous 'tribes' in the global periphery (e.g. Graeber 2001). Much is inevitably lost in translation, but this does not render the entire project void of a critical aspect. Given the implausibility of completely disconnecting from the rest of society, however, it appears prefigurativists are doomed to dilution for the foreseeable future.

There is another reason why the scenario of irrelevance is a misleading image, and I will discuss it here since it allows me to rectify a further misconception about prefigurativism that is common among critics. The critique that prefigurativism would be irrelevant presupposes that an escape from the colonial matrix of power has no effect on the latter (McKay 2009). McKay describes the decision to 'resign[...] from the state' as a 'stance of Christian resignation […] [to] wait passively for the darkness to swallow me' (2009: 137); a selfish decision to abandon the Left. On the contrary, however, rather than understanding disentanglement as an escape – as a disentanglement *from* – disentanglement should be understood as a continuing relation – a disentanglement *of*. Mignolo's critique of modernity's monologic (Mignolo 2007, 2011) shows that a disentanglement by necessity damages the apparent universality and totality of the matrix. 'Dropping out' (Day 2005: 19) of any group or collective will cause that group or collective to recalibrate and change. The more people drop out, the more the collective is changed.

Related to this, many critics of prefigurativism also misinterpret the prefigurative attitude to collective or large scale action. For example, McKay expresses scepticism that 'individual activists' can weaken the state by resigning from it (2009: 137). McKay and others appear to be of the impression that prefigurativists believe they can change the entire world single-handedly by simply changing their own personal behaviour (see also Sharzer 2012). If this were the case, prefigurativists would indeed be mistaken. As I have already argued, however, this critique rests on a misunderstanding of the prefigurative logic, which in fact argues exactly the opposite. The intention is *not* for any elite or vanguard to change the world for everybody else; rather, everybody must prefigure their own radical change, both individually and collectively. Furthermore, there is nothing in the logic of prefigurativism that precludes inviting others in society to do so. Sharzer (2012), McKay (2009) and Cooper & Hardy (2013: 97) appear to believe that prefigurativists necessarily are averse to communicating and co-operating with others in

society. This too, however, is based on a misunderstanding of the logic and ontological assumptions of prefigurativism. The importance of organising with peers, and of being visible to the rest of society, is as much a part of the logic of prefigurativism as it is of the logic of hegemonism or the politics of demand: there is nothing in the creation of alternatives, or in the capillary view of power, that precludes the formation of federations, collaborations or self-promotion (Wilson 2014: 179). Prefigurativists can – and I would argue, should – maximise the impact of their disentanglement by being as visible and outspoken as possible, especially through organising together with other prefigurativists, to inform and inspire others to engage in disentanglement also. This is precisely what my case study organisations do.

Café Libertad, the Zapatistas and Turqle all work with political peers and allies to strengthen their prefigurative activities. For example, Café Libertad works with the global Zapatista solidarity network RedProZapa, the German network Ya-Basta-Netz, and several other international groups and networks (see e.g. Zapatistgruppa Bergen 2015). Through these networks, as well as on their own, Café Libertad informs the general public about the Zapatista struggle, produces information leaflets and texts, organises film nights and talks, writes open letters to governments and IGOs, and much more (e.g. Tierra y Libertad 2008). The Zapatistas take part in these networks through releasing open letters and communiqués detailing their political views and actions, inviting outsiders into Zapatista territories for peace camps and festivals, receiving and training volunteers, and more (EZLN 2014).

Turqle, meanwhile, is a very active member of the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO). The WFTO is an international federation of alternative traders who aim for an equalisation of global trading relations. It is completely separate from, and predates, the now much larger network Fairtrade International, i.e. the well-known certification body mentioned in chapter 1. The aims of the WFTO are more ambitious than those of Fairtrade International, and most notably, one of its ten basic principles is dedicated to 'capacity building' in suppliers, in other words what GVC analysts might call functional upgrade. (When I contacted all British members listed on the WFTO's website in 2011 , however, I found that few members saw this principle as key or were engaged in projects that would directly implement it). As well as allowing its members to share information and resources with each other, the WFTO lobbies governments and IGOs, educates and informs consumers across the world, and has recently launched its own alternative fair trade certification, which certifies entire companies rather than individual products (WFTO 2015).

The logic of prefigurative politics does thus not preclude collective action and

extroversion. What it *does* preclude, however, are several beliefs that are common in contemporary Leftist politics: firstly the idea that social change must happen through a centralised and unified revolution; secondly, that an elite group or vanguard can, or even must, liberate the rest of the population on their behalf; and thirdly, that political means are unrelated to ends, meaning that anti-hierarchical organisations can organise hierarchically or let oppressive behaviours flourish within their groups, even though they are working towards anti-hierarchical aims (Wilson 2014; Holloway 2002; Day 2015).

Like upgrade requires everybody's political involvement in defining and interpreting the ways in which value should be understood (as we saw in the previous chapter), the logic of prefigurativism requires everybody's involvement in (dis)entangling the colonial matrix.

To summarise this section, while the Zapatistas and Café Libertad exemplify the logic of non-hegemonic prefigurativism more consistently, Turqle blends it with an occasional expression of the ambition to liberate all of South Africa. The vast majority of Turqle's activity, however, is prefigurative and thereby seeks to directly liberate only the individuals involved. The logic of prefigurativism, or the logic of affinity in Day's terms, does not seek to liberate the masses in any direct or universal sense. It does not allow for a vanguard that would liberate others on their behalf. What it does allow is the building of federations and collaborations, as well as the non-domineering (but not necessarily pacifist) promotion of the own cause to the rest of the population. Despite claims by critics that prefigurativism is insular, all three case study organisations express ambitions that concern everybody in society, and collaborate with others through federated networks. Indeed, as members of human society, prefigurative activists are almost inescapably entangled in the lives of others. Prefiguring alternative practices thus entails two seemingly contradictory challenges: firstly, to achieve some meaningful level of disentanglement from the colonial matrix, and secondly, to successfully remain entangled in it, which at its most basic means staying alive and existing. In the tension between dilution and irrelevance, dilution wins out, which is a strength as well as a limitation of prefigurativism. Entanglement hinders alternative ways of being, but it also implies a disentanglement *of* rather than *from* the colonial matrix.

7-5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the success of these case studies in equalising trade relations, both as a direct question regarding their qualitative achievements (upgrade, egalitarian

rules and behaviour within the organisations themselves) and as a broader conceptual question regarding the relevance and scope of prefigurative strategies for creating social change. As for the challenges our case studies face in disentangling and remaining sufficiently entangled with the colonial matrix of power, our comparison has shown that both Turqle and Café Libertad are able to pay their suppliers a significantly higher price than conventional buyers would be willing to pay. Both organisations have weathered the global financial crisis of recent years and are furthermore able to access credit from banks or private investors at conventional interest rates. While sceptics of the non-profit co-operative movement have predicted that 'ethical' companies cannot compete with conventional capitalist companies (Sharzer 2012), my interviewees stated that the political and 'ethical' credentials of their products more than compensate for the slightly higher price: it is not difficult to find consumers who are willing to pay slightly more (Stephan in interview 8 Nov 2012; Folkert in interview 11 Nov 2012; Rain and Pieter in interview 3 Sept 2013; Bomvu manager in interview 10 Sept 2013; Linda in interview 11 Sept 2013; Luhlaza owner/manager in interview 12 Sept 2013; Sarah in interview 17 Sept 2013).

Turqle's upgrading model – focusing on functional, process and product upgrade as well as ameliorative social upgrade measures – provides opportunities for Turqle's supplier companies to continue growing and capturing more value-added in the long as well as medium and short term, and it equips workers and their children to gain higher paid employment. By contrast, the Zapatistas' and Café Libertad's model – paying a better price for the same product – provides the Zapatistas with very limited opportunities for continuing to capture more value-added in the long term. On the other hand, the Zapatistas' organisational and ownership structures provide vastly greater opportunities for social upgrade since all workers (bar those who are excluded from decision-making by patriarchal gender norms and casual farm labour employment practices) own the farms and coffee co-operatives together. Voice upgrade has proven to be very difficult in both cases. The exact cause for this is difficult to ascertain: perhaps the Zapatistas and the workers at Turqle's supplier companies lack the resources that would enable a dialogue about values across supplier and trader, whether physical or social. At the same time, Café Libertad and Turqle both appear unable to step outside of their assumptions about what good or correct business behaviour is, or what workers should want for their future. The producers, furthermore, may lack an incentive and interest to engage in such dialogue as they may deem it futile or neocolonial.

We have also seen that divisions within organisations are difficult to overcome, especially as their members are not always behaving according to reason and rationality. Achieving egalitarian organisations thus requires both formal institutions and informal

behavioural practice, for which there are pedagogical and facilitative tools.

Like any prefigurative organisation, Turqle, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad face the dilemma of dilution vs. irrelevance. The near-inevitability of entanglement stems from the difficulty and undesirability of disentangling from human society altogether. Rather than exclusively being a weakness, however, entanglement should partly be understood as a strength since it guarantees prefigurativism's relevance to the rest of humanity. Thanks to these organisations people in Europe *can* buy coffee, spices and sauces that are produced under markedly different conditions from conventional equivalents. Thanks to these trading relationships, the Zapatistas have not only more money but a greater political influence in the world. A range of businesses in the Western Cape region not only pay their staff living wages, but also offer them training and schooling that they and their children would not otherwise have had access to. These examples constitute real and meaningful changes; genuine disentanglements of the colonial matrix. Entanglement is both an obstacle to and a facilitator of disentanglement. The challenge for our case study organisations is, rather than getting as far away as possible from human society and its matrices of power, to successfully negotiate dilution.

While some commentators and activists may believe that radical social change is possible through a centralised revolution, a capillary interpretation of power does not allow such a view. Though certain institutions in society are hegemonic, their influence is limited (Foucault 1983). Since all actions constitute society – there is not some underlying or centralised social logic that determines social relations – only non-hegemonising means can achieve non-hegemonising ends (Day 2005). This is not to say that prefigurative organisations are insular or averse to collaborating with others: Café Libertad and the Zapatistas are active in several regional and global solidarity networks, and Turqle is active within the World Fair Trade Organisation. Organising together with others in solidarity and dedicating time and energy to informing and engaging the general public is helpful for tipping the balance between dilution and irrelevance in the right direction.

We are now nearing the end of this thesis and I will conclude my argument in the following chapter.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Coming to the end of this thesis, I will now conclude by looking back at the argument that has developed throughout the preceding chapters and by turning the gaze towards the future. The first section pulls together the strings from my argument and lays out my answer to the research question. The second section turns directly to the GVC analysis literature, which is the main body of literature that this thesis has sought to critique and add to. This section explicates the implications for GVC analysis of the work in this thesis, and indicates how my critiques could be implemented and incorporated into the GVC framework. The final section, 8-3., looks at future avenues of research to build on the work done here.

8-1. IN ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION, AND BEYOND

I set out to answer the question: *are prefigurative upgrade projects a successful tool for equalising trade relations across colonial divides?* At its most abstract this research question speaks to two of the most fundamental areas of interest in the Development Studies literature: what would an improved situation for the global South – i.e. 'development' (Burnell 2009) – look like, and how do we get there? These fundamental questions, of course, are far too general to answer in a single PhD thesis. The task in this thesis has instead been to address a much narrower question that fits under both of these concerns. Looking specifically at two case studies, I have sought to assess the ways in which they have been successful or unsuccessful at equalising their trade relations.

My answer to the research question of this thesis could be distilled into two fundamental points: firstly I have argued that upgrade, if it is to benefit people in the South, must be understood as something that goes beyond both the colonial division of labour and modern-capitalist assumptions about value. More specifically I have proposed the introduction of 'voice upgrade' into the conceptual framework of GVC analysis as a tool to understand and promote firm and chain governance structures that facilitate conversations about value. In proposing this analytical concept I call for a shift from the econocentric understanding of value as theorised in modern-capitalist economics (e.g. Marshall 1920), to an interpretation of value that is mindful of axes of power other than (and including) economics; that enables non-capitalist organisation of production; and that draws attention to the political nature of production. The notion of voice upgrade is an innovation to the GVC framework that would take this school of thought closer to

another descendant of the dependency school, namely decolonial theory (Mignolo and Escobar 2010; Bair 2009).

Secondly, I have argued that disentanglement of the colonial matrix almost always is accompanied by continued entanglement. Given a capillary view of power, disentanglement of conventional hierarchies does not occur through a centralised and universal revolution, but through continued ubiquitous subversions of it (Day 2005). A total disentanglement from the matrix would require outright isolation from the rest of society – something that is arguably both unattainable and strongly undesirable to most people. In addition, I argued in chapter 7 that continued entanglement is what guarantees the transformative potential of disentanglement *of* the colonial matrix since it protects against irrelevance. Continued entanglement, thus, is both a limitation and a strength of prefigurative politics. Applied to upgrade, this argument implies that economic upgrade – and to an extent social upgrade, though I have argued that the distinction between economic and social upgrade stems from the (inherently anti-egalitarian) capitalist business model – are as important as voice upgrade.

I have now stated my argument in the most general terms possible in order to highlight the relevance of this thesis to the broader Development literature. Importantly, however, this thesis is not the result of some large-scale research project or quantitative study; it has been written by one author in response to a specific and narrow research question. I have studied two specific prefigurative trading relationships that aim for upgrade of the Southern producer. I have found that these two case studies approach upgrade very differently: Turqle primarily seeks economic upgrade through functional, process and product upgrading strategies, as well as social upgrade. In its work together with Bomvu and Luhlaza it has managed to achieve both types of upgrade successfully. Bomvu and Luhlaza have, thanks to Turqle, developed the capability to export shelf-ready produce to European importers at decent prices. These producers have acquired not only the capability to produce finished products, but also to produce greater quantities of produce at higher speeds, and to gain health and safety accreditations. As for benefit to the workers, Turqle's Fair Trade Trust has paid for (or towards) workers' training and education and their children's school fees. Turqle demands that all their suppliers provide formal avenues for workers' input into firm-level decision-making and that they pay living wages. The most problematic areas for Turqle include the fact that their suppliers appear wedded to a capitalist organisation of production, and above all, that Turqle's value chains lack organisational tools (whether formal or informal) for voice upgrade. Though gender inequalities are prevalent in South African society at large, patriarchy does not appear to be a major influence on the activities or structures of neither Bomvu, Luhlaza nor Turqle. Rather, colonial/racist and capitalist inequalities

constitute the major obstacles to equal relations within these value chains. Finally, while financial survival has been achievable for Turqle through the recent financial crisis and while customers remain willing to pay premium prices for premium products, abiding by governmental bureaucratic procedures is both costly and arduous.

The Zapatistas and Café Libertad aim for economic upgrade through 'getting better paid for the same product' (Bolwig et al 2010: 177), but even more importantly they seek what I call voice upgrade – albeit with only partial success. That the Zapatistas receive a higher and more stable price from Café Libertad is beneficial, but unlike functional, process and product upgrade getting better paid for the same product provides only limited scope for continued improvement in the long term. Nevertheless, Café Libertad have remained able to pay the Zapatistas a better price, with an added solidarity premium, even during times of global financial hardship. More money to the Zapatista coffee co-operatives and farms means more money to all Zapatista coffee farmers and their non-coffee farming comrades – who are all constantly struggling against abject poverty – since Zapatista coffee co-operatives share their incomes between their members, and their surplus with the broader Zapatista community, in their rejection of private ownership. A major caveat to this statement is the fact that women remain vastly under-represented in decision-making processes at all levels of Zapatista organisation, that is, the Junta, the coffee co-operative and the farm. Though both the Zapatistas and Café Libertad are democratically organised internally (caveats withstanding), there is a striking lack of communication channels to accommodate conversations about value – or anything else aside from immediate business concerns – across the two actors. Emails and phone calls are frequently unanswered, face-to-face meetings cancelled, requests distrusted and dismissed, messages misunderstood. Going by my interviews with Café Libertad, this has resulted in some frustration, confusion and lack of trust between the two organisations. In addition to this, the lack of a purpose-built communication infrastructure between the two organisations leaves struggles about value hidden and confused.

8-2. IMPLICATIONS FOR GVC ANALYSIS: VOICE UPGRADE AND NON-CAPITALIST PRODUCTION

The framework of GVC analysis has the potential to be compatible with and receptive to the recommendations and conclusions of this thesis. GVC analysis is open to the idea that prefigurative trading can be a useful course of action for affecting trade relations. Indeed, many of the recommendations and policy prescriptions resulting from GVC research are of relevance not only or primarily to the state, but to businesses themselves (Mitchell

and Coles 2011; Humphrey and Schmitz 2000; Navas-Alemán 2011). The influential volume edited by Bair (2009) turns specifically to third sector activists and traders rather than governments in its policy prescriptions. The key concepts and analytical framework of the GVC literature focus on the behaviour and opportunities for businesses directly, rather than for states or IGOs: upgrade refers to the ability of individual firms or firm clusters to improve their position in the value chain, and governance refers to the relationship between firms in a chain (Kaplinsky and Morris 2001). These analytical tools are well suited to accommodate discussions that go beyond capitalocentrism and that embrace prefigurativism.

My critique of GVC analysis is thus not that the foundation of this literature is flawed – rather, my contention is that GVC analysis must accommodate a more radical critique of the status quo in order to successfully promote egalitarian trading relations. My main criticism has been that GVC analysis has failed to adequately critique capitalocentrism. This is true in two respects. Firstly, GVC analysis has paid too little attention to the fact that trade relations are about more than economics. I have sought to highlight, and begin to remedy, the dearth of critical discussion of the concept of value within GVC analysis. As Gereffi et al 2001 attest, GVC analysts have uncritically accepted the capitalist understanding of value as financial profit or return on investment. As Marx and subsequent marxist writers have shown, however, value is a measure of social relations rather than of the independent or asocial worth of objects (Marx 2015 [1887]; Spivak 1985). Value is a contested question concerning the organisation and justice of productive activity in global trade. How should we divide work between people? How and on what basis should resources be shared? These are not only 'economic' questions but also questions about the relationship between genders, ethnicities and continents. In this thesis I have used the concept of the colonial matrix of power to highlight the inter-related nature of these axes of power. I have stylised my colonial matrix along three axes: capitalocentrism, androcentrism and Eurocentrism. This stylisation is a heuristic device to aid discussion in this thesis – not a universalising ontological description of the world.

I have proposed the notion of 'voice upgrade' as a way for GVC analysis to incorporate these concerns. Voice upgrade, I suggest, is the improvement in people's ability within the chain to speak and listen about values. For GVC analysis, the introduction of the concept of voice upgrade would require both a drastically increased openness and a critical awareness of theoretical discussions around value (in the manner I have already demonstrated), and an interest in the formal and informal organisational tools available to firms to allow such conversations to flourish. Like economic and social upgrade are measured by both qualitative and quantitative improvements – increased value-added

capture, increased pay, shortened working hours, 'better' working conditions, less discrimination etc – so can voice upgrade be measured by formal and informal opportunities to discuss value (meetings, letters, online discussion boards, conferences, focus groups, etc), the quantitative incidence of discussions and their qualitative nature, people's assessment of the success and effectiveness of these discussions, etc.

The case studies in this thesis have already offered some insights on this topic. From the case of Café Libertad and the Zapatistas we have learnt that democratic decision-making structures that can accommodate conversations about value *within* firms do not necessarily lead to such conversations existing *between* firms. Rather, I would argue that dedicated measures must be put in place between these organisations to explicitly address voice upgrade. We can also learn from this case study, and from the case of Turqle, that functional democratic decision-making requires more than a formal invitation to engage. Hierarchies based on, for example, gender, levels of education or experience must be addressed in order for all members to have anything resembling an equal chance to participate meaningfully. Measures that can be useful include training, quotas, rotating roles of responsibility, skill sharing, and more (Seeds for Change 2009). All three flatly structured organisations studied in this thesis have their own unwanted hierarchies: the Zapatistas have problems including women in decision-making, Café Libertad find it difficult to balance members' varying levels of expertise and knowledge, and Turqle is disproportionately driven and influenced by its two founding members.

On a similar note, the case of Turqle has shown the difficulty – or perhaps impossibility – of creating functional democratic organisational structures to accommodate conversations about value *for a group one does not belong to*. When inviting factory workers to take part in Fair Trade Trust decision-making, workers have either shown a deep disinterest, or advocated for decisions that Turqle staff perceive to be wrong, inappropriate or outside the remit of the Trust. Facing this impasse Turqle has decided to start by training workers in skills that are useful for taking part in organisational decision-making (literacy, critical thinking, budgeting, etc) and seeing if that prompts workers to found organisational bodies of their own. After many years of Apartheid, colonial resource extraction, capitalism and patriarchy, this journey appears to be a long one, leading Turqle to hope for 'lawn' rather than 'trees' (Rain in interview 3 Sept 2013).

The concept of voice upgrade as I have conceptualised it would be an entirely new and original addition to GVC analysis. There is, however, a central notion within the GVC literature that already bears some resemblance to it, namely governance. Chain governance refers to the repeated or systematic power relationships between firms in a value chain that determine or influence decision-making (Morrison et al 2008: 40). As

such, attention to decision-making imbalances are not new to the GVC literature – though three distinct shortcomings make the governance framework inadequate for understanding voice upgrade: firstly, as is the case for GVC analysis at large, the governance literature has accommodated very little explicit critical discussion of the value concept. Secondly, its existing typology of governance structures lacks a type that is deliberately egalitarian (see Ponte and Sturgeon 2014), meaning that GVC analysis has hitherto been unable to register or appreciate forms of governance that might facilitate discussions about value. Thirdly, the GVC literature distinguishes between the notion of upgrade and the notion of governance, as if improvements in governance could not in itself amount to upgrade (see e.g. Gereffi et al 2005).

In addition to paying too little attention to the fact that trade is about more than economics, there is a second way in which GVC analysis has failed to adequately critique the colonial logic of capitalocentrism. GVC analysis has given too little regard to the fact that there are other economic models and relations than capitalist ones (a similar argument has been made in Selwyn 2013). As J. K. Gibson-Graham have shown, capitalist economic relations make up only a share – perhaps less than half – of the productive relations humans engage in (2006a, 2006b). Rather than focusing on production that is capitalist (i.e. production that is for-profit, distinguishes between owners and workers, and encourages competition), GVC analysis has the potential to analyse and advocate more egalitarian forms of business.

As I argued in chapter 6, the GVC literature should explicitly acknowledge that the distinction between social and economic upgrade implies a capitalist organisation of production; the distinction between the two types of upgrade is not universal. Only when a workers' income is by organisational design lower than the financial value the worker has created for the firm is the concept of social upgrade applicable. In a firm where workers and owners are the same – for example a workers' co-operative – financial gain for the firm automatically (in principle) results in financial gain for its worker-owners. Rather than a gold standard or ultimate aim, then, social upgrade should be understood as a limited and compromised device, far less promising than an altogether egalitarian and democratic organisation of production.

8-3. AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As I have stressed, the remit of this thesis has been limited and narrow. I have addressed a particular research question and have been able to carry out only limited empirical research under a specific period, with very limited funding. Like any exercise in learning

and constructing new knowledge, this research project has served, among other things, to point out how little we know. Several lines of future inquiry have emerged as natural, if not necessary, steps ahead. Some of these relate more specifically to the case studies in this thesis, and others are of a more theoretical and general nature.

Firstly, each of the case studies provides promising avenues for future continued enquiry. In the case of Café Libertad and the Zapatistas I found a lack of systematic discussions about value between the two organisations. Both Café Libertad and the Zapatistas are democratically organised internally (caveats withstanding) and see democratic organisation as a key element of their activities. Furthermore, they both highlight the political aspects of economic relations: as we saw in chapter 4 they oppose capitalocentrism, as well as any universalising thought in general, and underscore the importance of political discussion. Yet – surprisingly to me – they lack a formal or deliberate institutional infrastructure for struggling about value *between* them. This thesis has only been able to identify this problematic issue, to begin to understand its nature, and to suggest improvements to the framework of GVC analysis that would enable that literature to make sense of such problems.

A promising continuation of this work would be to study the obstacles to overt communication between these organisations at greater depth. A method that would be well placed for this would be participatory action research, setting out with the provisional aim of trialling voice upgrading measures between the two organisations (for example, instigating regular meetings, holding training, inviting feedback from members) in collaboration with key staff or community members from both organisations. Similar research projects have been done within GVC analysis previously, for example the volume edited by Mitchell and Coles (2011) contains reports from seven participatory action research projects, each trialling economic and social upgrading measures in different settings in the global South. Work by J. K. Gibson-Graham (2006b) reports from and evaluates action research projects undertaken by the authors in collaboration with community members in, among other places, Australia and the Philippines. These projects are not related to GVC upgrade but their aims and interests are nevertheless very similar to those suggested here: they set out to trial what they call 'community economies', a key element of which is the fostering of political conversations in relation to work and resources. Participatory action research and the use of organisational experimentation could allow for a deeper understanding of the obstacles to thoughtful conversations about value between the Zapatistas and Café Libertad, and could provide even more specific and detailed input into the development of voice upgrade as an analytical tool within GVC analysis.

When it comes to our second case study, Turqle is an organisation that we encountered partway through what could be characterised as its own trialling project in response to the voice upgrade problems it has faced – even if Turqle members do not use those terms to describe the situation themselves. Finding that workers are either disinterested in attending meetings to discuss what the Trust should be doing – meetings that, I suggest, could be understood as a promising platform for speaking and listening about value more generally – or that they demand what Turqle perceive as the wrong things, Turqle has decided to train the staff of its supplier factories in skills that might be conducive to what I have called voice upgrade. A promising follow-up to my research in this thesis would therefore be to revisit Turqle and its suppliers to investigate the extent to which the training offered by Turqle might influence the workers' desire or propensity to organise as a political group or to take part in Turqle's meetings. It would also be enlightening to undertake deeper ethnographic research to explore to what extent the workers' disinterest in Trust governance and training is an expression of everyday resistance or exit. A broad range of considerations emerge: how do workers perceive the training; do they have an interest or see a benefit in taking part in discussions about value; what would a 'successful' organisational setup look like? Findings from such a research project may prove a vital addition to my conception of voice upgrade and how it could relate to other types of GVC upgrade.

One of the limitations of my empirical work with Turqle's suppliers for this thesis was that my contact with Bomvu and Luhlaza workers was both brief and relatively superficial. I spent only one full day in their respective workplaces and held individual interviews of between 30 and 60 minutes with selected workers. This, coupled with my status as an outsider whose independence from Turqle or Bomvu and Luhlaza's owners was, in the eyes of workers, not definitively guaranteed, made it difficult for me to evoke candid responses from interviewees. Such limitations might be avoided in the future through the enlistment of selected factory workers to act as interviewers and co-researchers.

Secondly, beyond following up the specific cases studies here, future avenues for continuing this research may also be of a more theoretical and general nature. In this thesis I have introduced a new concept and proposed it be added to the GVC framework. The concept of voice upgrade has barely begun its life – further study is needed in order to develop it and apply it to different settings. Questions that present themselves include: how can voice be defined? Might voice upgrade mean different things in vastly different contexts? In what ways do economic and social upgrade help or hinder voice upgrade? What kinds of formal and informal tools might be conducive to voice upgrade – are the ones I have listed here the most effective or are there better alternatives? Is a

person's position in the value chain, e.g. upstream vs. downstream, likely to affect their attitude towards the idea of voice upgrade? And even: is voice upgrade the most effective analytical vehicle for its intended purpose (i.e. to highlight the social and political nature of economics, to politicise the question of what successful business might be, to foster speaking and listening about values across value chains) or might it be succeeded by something even better?

These are only some of the questions that arise from the introduction of the concept of voice upgrade. While some of them could partly be answered through continued study of Turqle, Turqle's suppliers, the Zapatistas and Café Libertad, many others would require larger scale studies or studies of significantly different cases. All organisations studied here produce food products for sale in Europe; they all have an 'ethical' or political orientation that points away from conventional capitalism; they are all small enterprises; they all work in relatively short value chains with few nodes. Studies of value chains that significantly depart from this description would provide new input, for example studies of medium-sized or large firms in hierarchical chains in the clothing industry, or firms in very long supply chains with many nodes in South-South chains. A means of gaining broader, albeit more superficial, information would be to undertake a mixed quantitative and qualitative study of a larger number of firms, mapping the input-output structures for voice (equivalent to economic input-output structures, see chapter 2) and gaining an overview of attitudes and obstacles to voice upgrade through interviews. Even greater scrutiny could be given to the notion of voice upgrade were it to be welcomed by the GVC literature and used as an analytical concept in a plethora of GVC studies.

The research in this thesis has made a limited but important contribution to the fields of International Political Economy and Development Studies. Despite the limitations of this research, several aspects of this thesis are of great importance: I have challenged the prevalent capitalocentrism of GVC analysis and drawn attention to the colonial nature of some of its fundamental premises. If GVC analysis is to benefit oppressed and marginalised people in the global South, it must transcend these assumptions. I have also drawn attention the contradictions inherent in the GVC concept of social upgrade, adding to critiques by authors such as Selwyn (2013) that the notion of social upgrade is contingent upon a capitalist organisation of production, which is inherently exploitative. The extent to which social upgrade can be beneficial to workers is therefore severely limited. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have introduced the novel concept of 'voice upgrade'. I have shown that value is most accurately understood, not as an apolitical or universal economic notion, but as a political question concerning social relations: how should productive activity be organised? Rather than ignoring and implicitly silencing them, 'voice upgrade' provides a platform for struggles over value

and brings the analysis of value into Value Chains analysis.

Appendix A

List of Participants with Dates of Formal Interviews

Café Libertad

Stephan (8th Nov 2012)

Gerrit (9th Nov 2012)

Folkert (11th November 2012, 19th April 2013, 20th April 2013

Michael (12th Nov 2012)

Turqle

Rain (13th May 2013, 3rd Sept 2013, 11th Sept 2013)

Pieter (3rd Sept 2013, 11th Sept 2013)

Linda (Weds 11th Sept 2013)

Sarah (Tues 17th Sept 2013)

Bomvu

Owner (10th Sept 2013)

Manager (10th Sept 2013)

Worker 1 (10th Sept 2013)

Worker 2 (10th Sept 2013)

Worker 3 (10th Sept 2013)

Luhlaza

Owner/manager (12th Sept 2013)

Worker 1 (12th Sept 2013)

Worker 2 (12th Sept 2013)

Other

Tricia, Just Change, UK (18th June 2012)

Connal, Value Added in Africa, Ireland (25th Sept 2012)

Jesper, House of Fair Trade, Sweden (29th Oct 2012)

Katie, Ecologie Home, UK (14th May 2013)

Stan, Just Change, India (31st May 2013)

Claudio C., Tatawelo, Italy (9th July 2013)

Debbie, Gourmet Provisions, South Africa (16th September 2013)

Appendix B

Example Emails Sent to Research Participants

Initial Email Sent to Café Libertad

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6th May 2012

// German original version: //

Hallo,

ich bin eine Doktoratsstudentin an der University of London, aber neben meiner akademischen Tätigkeit bin ich seit zehn Jahren in der anarchistisch antikapitalistischen Bewegung Großbritanniens aktiv. In meiner Diss beschäftige ich mich mit Aktivismus betreffend Fragen des Welthandels und insbesondere mit D.I.Y.-Aktivismus – also mit Projekten, in denen AktivistInnen alternative, nicht-kapitalistische Handelssysteme erproben und so die globale kapitalistische Wirtschaftsweise kritisieren. Zapatista Kaffee ist für mich eindeutig ein Beispiel hierfür: Ich als Kundin und ihr als Händler können an Kaffee gelangen, ohne dafür am ausbeuterischen weltweiten Handelssystem teilzunehmen. Ich denke, die Erfindung von Alternativen, die außerhalb der kapitalistischen Logik verortet sind, ist eine wirklich interessante und vielversprechende Form von Aktivismus, weshalb ich ihnen meine Diss widme.

Ich schreibe diese Email, um euch um Hilfe zu bitten bei meiner Suche nach einem ganz bestimmten Typ von Importorganisation. Ich suche nach Importeuren (Kollektiven oder Individuen), deren Fokus auf der Einfuhr fertiger Produkte liegt. Zapatista Kaffee wird in Europa geröstet und abgepackt für den europäischen Konsum, aber ich suche nach einer antikapitalistischen Handelsorganisation, die nur vollständig fertiggestellte und paketierte Produkte importiert, oder die zumindest versucht, sich in diese Richtung zu entwickeln. Ich habe überall in Europa nach jemandem gesucht, der auf diese Weise importiert, aber bisher niemanden finden können. Daher möchte ich euch fragen: Kennt ihr jemanden, der nur fertige Produkte importiert (oder dies wenigstens versucht)? Zum Beispiel eure Zapatista-Schuhe – werden diese komplett in Mexiko von den Zapatistas hergestellt und dann als fertige Produkte nach Europa exportiert?

Falls nicht, habt ihr dies jemals in Erwägung gezogen? bzw. gibt es praktische Gründe, weshalb die Zapatistas ihren Kaffee nicht selbst rösten und euch als fertiges und paketiertes Produkt zukommen lassen können? Ich weiß, dass das vermutlich eine sehr schwierige Frage ist; fühlt euch also bitte nicht verpflichtet, mir eine lange und ausführliche Antwort zu geben. Aber falls ihr irgendwelche Ideen habt, wäre ich euch dafür sehr verbunden! Ich weiß, dass StudentInnen, die um Hilfe für ihre Dissertationsprojekte ansuchen, mitunter ein bisschen

selbstbezogen wirken können, als ob sie es einfach auf eine gute Note abgesehen hätten. Ich möchte nur klarstellen, dass ich dieses Forschungsprojekt nicht zu meinem eigenen Nutzen verfolge, sondern um der antikapitalistischen Bewegung dabei zu helfen, ihre eigenen Strategien zu überdenken und kritisch danach zu fragen, welches die beste Vorgehensweise ist, dem Kapitalismus zu widerstehen. Ich werde die Ergebnisse publizieren und gratis zur Verfügung stellen, um sicherzugehen, dass sie von praktischem Nutzen für Aktivisten überall auf der Welt sind.

Ich möchte euch nicht in Informationen ertränken, aber falls ihr mehr über die antikapitalistischen Theorien in Erfahrung bringen wollt, die mein Projekt informieren, könnt ihr dies auf meinem englischsprachigen Blog tun: http://qmul.academia.edu/SofaGradin/Blog. Ich selbst spreche nur englisch (und schwedisch), habe aber einen Freund gebeten, diese Email ins Deutsche zu übertragen – fühlt euch frei, auf deutsch oder englisch zu antworten (oder beides!).

Weitere Infos zu meiner Person findet ihr auf meiner Uni-Homepage:
http://www.politics.qmul.ac.uk/research/postgraduateresearch/Taking%20Action%20to%20Make%20World%20Trade%20More%20Equal%20/71533.html

Vielen herzlichen Dank für jeden Hinweis und jede Hilfestellung, die ihr erübrigen könnt,
Sofa Gradin
London, Großbritannien

// English translation: //

Hi there,

I am a PhD researcher at University of London, but apart from being an academic I have also been active in the anarchist/anticapitalist movement in Britain for ten years. I am doing my PhD research on activism about world trade issues, particularly 'd.i.y.' activism - that is, activism where people set up their own alternative non-capitalist trading systems to replace and criticise the mainstream capitalist economy. Zapatista coffee for me is a clear example of this: I as a customer and you as traders can get hold of coffee without having to implicate ourselves in the global exploitative mainstream trading system. I think creating alternatives that exist outside of capitalism is a really interesting and promising form of activism, which is why I am researching about it in my PhD.

I am e-mailing you to ask for help to find a particular type of importing organisation. I am looking for importing organisations (or individuals) who specifically focus on importing finished

products. Zapatista coffee is roasted and packaged in Europe for European consumption, but I am looking for an anti-capitalist trading organisation that only imports completely finished and packaged products, or that are at least trying to move to a finished-only situation. I have looked all over Europe for somebody who imports in this way, but I have not found anyone yet. So I want to ask you, do you know of anybody who imports only finished products (or tries to)?

If not, have you ever considered this yourselves, and are there practical reasons that make it impossible for you to let the Zapatistas roast their coffee themselves and send it to you as a finished and packaged product? I know this might be a big question, so don't feel obliged to give me a long and arduous answer. But if you have any ideas then I would be extremely grateful. I know that students who ask for help with their research can sometimes appear a bit self-interested, as if they ask you simply to help them get a good grade for their coursework. I just want to clarify that I am not doing this research project for my own gain but to help the anti-capitalist movement think about its own strategies and to think critically about how we can best take action to resist capitalism. I will be publishing this research for free and making sure it will be of practical use to activists all over the world.

I don't want to drown you in information, but if you want to know more about the anti-capitalist theories that inform my project then you can find it on this page: http://qmul.academia.edu/SofaGradin/Blog which is in English. I actually only speak English but I have gotten a friend of mine to translate this e-mail to German - feel free to reply in either German or English (or both!).

You can also see more info about me on my university's website: http://www.politics.qmul.ac.uk/research/postgraduateresearch/Taking%20Action%20to%20Make%20World%20Trade%20More%20Equal%20/71533.html

Thank you so much for any help you could give me and this project.
Sofa Gradin
London, UK

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Initial Email Sent to Turqle

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22nd Oct 2012

Hi Turqle,

I'm a PhD student in London, UK.

My research focuses on trading companies who are trying to 'do something' about the inequalities of world trade. Some of the problems about world trade are expressed and addressed by the Fairtrade movement - but, as you very rightly point out on your website, others are not.

My PhD project, in a nutshell, looks at importers and exporters who not only trade 'fairly', but who also address the unequal 'global division of labour', i.e. the pattern that high-paid jobs in design, management and PR tend to be done in the global North and low-paid agricultural jobs, basic manufacturing, etc, tend to be done in the global South. My project is informed by Dependency Theory, Global Value Chains Analysis and other development theories that focus on this unequal division of labour (or 'unequal exchange').

Not many trading organisations seem to pay much attention to this global division of labour, so it's very exciting to hear about you and your work! As you say on your website, FLO-certified fair traders (and even most WFTO members in my experience) completely ignore this issue and focus instead more narrowly on fair wages, long-term contracts, etc (which are very good and important things too, don't get me wrong!).

The aim of my research is to look at, and raise awareness of, things that people are doing to directly address trade inequalities and unequal exchange. I will also be trying to discern any patterns in what 'works well' and what doesn't for people who run egalitarian trading companies. Apart from an academic book, the output of the research will be a kind of how-to guidebook for starting and running an importing company in Europe that functions in the most mutually beneficial way possible, and that is designed to address the inequalities of the global division of labour.

Some of the things I'm wondering about you are:
1) How are you structured as a company - are you a co-operative? Do you make decisions collectively?

2) I've read about your Fair Trade Fund which is very unusual in that it directly addresses the division of labour by helping workers and their families 'upgrade' their own skills. Do you have any other organisational tools that directly addresses the global division of labour?

3) How did you first hear about and become interested in the global division of labour? Are you motivated and informed by any particular academic theories?

4) Are you aware of any other trading companies that focus on the division of labour as much as you do? Is there in your opinion a 'community' of companies world wide who discuss these issues, or do you feel alone in focusing on this?

I realise that I'm suddenly coming out of no-where and bombarding you with questions! If it would be easier for you to reply in speech rather than typing, I would very happily speak on the phone or via Skype, just let me know.

More information about me and my PhD project is on my university's website: http://www.politics.qmul.ac.uk/research/postgraduateresearch/Taking%20Action%20to%20Make%20World%20Trade%20More%20Equal%20/71533.html (or http://tinyurl.com/curjx85 if the previous link didn't work).

I am, to make an understatement, very interested in hearing more about you and your responses to these questions! So thank you for any time you could spare.

Many thanks,
Sofa Gradin
School of Politics and International Relations
Queen Mary, University of London
s.p.gradin@qmul.ac.uk

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Initial Email Sent to Bomvu and Luhlaza

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Dear [Bomvu/Luhlaza],

I am a PhD researcher in London, England, and I study companies who export products to Europe in a way that's not only fairtrade, but that also puts emphasis on giving more control of the supply chain to the producers and challenging the global dominance of European importers and retailers.

One of the companies I am studying is Turqle Trading, and I have heard of you as a result. [...]

I will be visiting the Western Cape between mid-August and mid-September and I was wondering whether I could visit your offices one day in that time period and have a chat with one of your managers and two factory workers to find out more? I appreciate that you might want to know more before saying either yes or no, so I have provided further info below, and feel free to ask me more questions via e-mail or Skype. I have been in contact with Rain at Turqle for some time and I will be visiting them to have similar chats while I'm in Cape Town.

Many thanks, and sorry for appearing out of the blue like this!
Sofa

About my research and what I would be asking

My research looks a how international trade could be beneficial for producers in less affluent and less privileged areas. Fairtrade is a good step towards making world trade more equal, but even in Fairtrade supply chains into Europe the most profitable jobs (in marketing, management, final manufacturing, etc) are still usually done by privileged Europeans. I am looking at how these higher value-added jobs could be reclaimed by the workers who grow or extract the raw materials themselves. That is why I am interested in the training and skills upgrading opportunities that you offer your workers - not only do you pay your workers a good wage, but you offer them routes to develop their skills and move up the value-chain. The point of my research is to gather tangible knowledge on how this can be done in a good way, so other traders can learn from this, and so more Fairtrade importers can start to help producers take over more and more of the higher value-added jobs themselves.

What I would be asking for is if I could visit your offices and have a chat with a higher-tier representative of your company, as well as two or more of your factory workers (separately) for about 40-60 mins each. I would like to find out more about how [Bomvu/Luhlaza] offers training opportunities to the workers and how the workers can take part in influencing their own work and life conditions. Questions I would want to ask include: how can a worker access training and what factors influence their decisions about whether to take up training or not? Do the workers feel they have control over their own working lives or are their life choices too limited? How could importing companies in Europe or North America be more helpful in supporting the growth of production of finished goods for companies such as [Bomvu/Luhlaza] and its workers?

What I can offer you in return for your time

In return for meeting me for up to an hour I am happy to offer your staff financial remuneration (for example payment at the rate of their normal wage for the time they take to meet with me), as well as free refreshments/tea/coffee/lunch/dinner during our meeting - there is room for this in my research funding. I am also more than happy to write your company a report, or article or any other written material that would be of help to you.

How the information will be used

Everyone I speak to - individuals as well as organisations - will by default be anonymous, unless they expressly ask to be named. Anonymity means I remove names as well as any other details that could make the speaker identifiable indirectly.

The information I gather will be used for academic as well as non-academic publications: I will turn this into a PhD thesis and various academic journal articles, but I am also writing a non-academic book aimed at European importers and development practitioners detailing how decision-making power and profitability in the value chain can be shifted from Europe and into

the hands of less privileged raw materials producers. All the publications I create will be available for free to the public and I will send free copies to anybody who is interested.

About me

I am a 30-year old PhD researcher who grew up in a working class family in Sweden, and for the past ten years I have been studying International Politics and Development academically, focusing on progressive trade. Outside of academia I have been a global justice activist, being part of local and global grassroots protest movements, volunteering for development NGOs and providing free training to a non-academic public.

Sofa Gradin
PhD Candidate, Queen Mary, University of London
http://www.politics.qmul.ac.uk/research/degrees/postgraduateresearch/Sofa%20Gradin/71533.html

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Appendix C

Examples of Interview Questions

Café Libertad

- What is the driving force in the relationship between Café Libertad and the coffee producers in Mexico? How is this evident in your daily work?
- What positive contribution does Café Libertad make to the lives of the coffee producers? Do you do stuff to actively educate your consumers? Do you get input from your consumers for how to do your trading, or does nobody comment?
- Compared to before, what is different in the world now that Café Libertad exists? Both from your own perspective and the wider world's.
- Tell me about your last shipment of coffee from Mexico. Thinking right from the top, what had to happen for that coffee to appear in Hamburg? What did you contribute and what did others contribute?
- Do you have a 'good' relationship with the coffee producers you import from?
- Have you thought of leaving Café Libertad in the past six months? Why/not?
- Who is involved in the organisation? Who's the demographic?
- How is the relationship with the coffee exporters in Mexico enacted on a practical level? Do you keep e-mail contact regularly? Phone contact? Do you speak informally with the Zapatistas or is it strictly a business relationship?
- How you view the coffee producers?
- Why you involved in Café Libertad? Do you find it enjoyable? Do you feel a political duty? Do you do it for money?
- How are decisions made within Café Libertad and across the importer/exporter relationship?
- (How) do you think about the global division of labour, 'upgrade', etc? Is this a central idea in the organisation or a peripheral one?
- What attempts have been made to offer the Zapatistas a coffee roaster?
- I already know some of the main challenges to the organisation (lack of financial security, lack of commitment from Zapatista coffee exporters to offer a deal when big corporate buyers can pay a higher price) but what practical difficulties do these pose for Café Libertad, and how do you deal with it?
- What are you informed by politically? Have you read a lot of anti-capitalist books, or studied at university – or is it more based on personal experiences, thoughts and discussions?
- Is the division of labour within Café Libertad highly formalised, or 'messy' – constant or fluctuating? (I.e. who does what jobs and do the job roles rotate?)

- What resources does the organisation rely on? E.g. money: do you make all the money you need from selling coffee, or do you get additional funding from anywhere? Facilities: does the organisation have an office or shop, and if so, how is that paid for? How do you pay for storage facilities? Machines: does the organisation own computers or do members use their own? Who pays for phone calls? Do members use their own transport (vans, cars, bikes...) in their job? Contacts: how valuable are personal contacts for the survival of the organisation? For example, have informal personal bonds given Café Libertad valuable customers, valuable resources, legal help, etc? Or are these contacts and networks more formal than personal? Knowledge: who is trained in the organisation? Do members undertake regular training? Is knowledge acquired formally or does the organisation simply rely on the knowledge that members happen to have already? Allies: Do you feel that the organisation is 'helped' by any allies – i.e. is there a mentor, patron (whether an individual or an organisation), network of similar organisations, or do you feel that Café Libertad is alone out there? 'Enemies': conversely, are there any main (organisational or personal) obstacles or blocks to what you are trying to do? Class: Do you have to be middle class to start and run an organisation like Café Libertad?
- What change has Café Libertad achieved for its coffee exporters as well as its own members? Looking back to before Café Libertad existed, what is different now?

Turqle

- What does Turqle do? Why does Turqle exist?
- What are the most important things about Turqle for you?
- How would you describe your relationship to the people who work for your suppliers?
- Tell me more about your training programmes:
  - How do they work? How are they paid for? Who can take part?
  - Who decides how they should be designed? Can you give me an example of how a training programme was designed?
  - Why is this training important/why do you do it? Does the training improve the situations of the people who work for your suppliers?
  - Why is it important that your suppliers sell finished products? How do your training programmes fit into that?
  - Why do/don't workers go to your training?
- Tell me more about your role in helping to upgrade your suppliers' capabilities:
  - You help design packaging for your suppliers. Why do you do this and not the suppliers themselves? Do you have evidence that one particular style of

packaging is more effective than another?
    - Where do you learn about the legal issues and the bureaucratic procedures that you advise your suppliers on?
    - What else do you do to help your suppliers capture more of the value-added/surplus.
    - What are the most difficult things about trying to capture more value-added/surplus?
    - How do you choose which suppliers to work with?
    - Can you give me examples of how your suppliers have increased their value-added capture since you started?
- Tell me more about how you communicate with your supplier companies:
    - How and how often do you communicate?
    - How and how often do meetings happen between you and your suppliers?
    - Who do you speak to when you speak to suppliers? Managers only?
    - How are decisions made between Turqle and suppliers?
    - Do you find it easy to communicate with your suppliers and their workers? What are the main challenges?
    - Do you often hear specific opinions or requests coming from the workers on the factory floor?
    - Would your relationship work as well if you were based on the other side of the world, say in Britain?
- Tell me more about yourself:
    - Why are you working for Turqle? Why are you living in Cape Town?

Bomvu/Lulhaza

Manager:

- Tell me more about your company's history and rationale:
    - Why did you company start? What are Khoisan's aims? What do you wish your company will be like in 25 years? 5 years?
- Tell me more about yourself:
    - Why do you work for this company? How did you get this job? Why are you living in Velddrif?
- Tell me more about how your company has improved its position in the value chain since being involved with Turqle:
    - Have you been able to gain control of more value-added/hi tech/high skilled tasks in the production chain than before you worked with Turqle?
    - Have your staff taken part in Turqle's training programmes? How did that

work? Have they managed to implement that learning in their work? Are those staff still working for you? Do you think their financial position has improved as a result of that training?
    - What other services has Turqle provided for your company (beyind training) and what have you had to pay for it?
    - To what extent do you think what you and Turqle are doing can help 'develop' South Africa or improve the social situation for its people?
    - Do you have future plans to further increase the skill level or technology level of your staff or your products? Why (not) – why would that be desirable?
- Tell me more about how you communicate with Turqle:
    - How and how often do you communicate?
    - How and how often do meetings happen between you and Turqle?
    - How are decisions made between you and Turqle?
    - Do you find it easy to communicate with Turqle? What are the main challenges?
    - Do you often hear specific opinions or requests coming from your factory workers to Turqle?
    - Would your relationship work as well if Turqle were based on the other side of the world, say in Britain?
- Tell me more about what it's like to work for your company:
    - How much do you pay your staff? Have wage levels changed in the last few years?
    - What are the best and most difficult things about your job?
    - Can you think of a decision that has been made in response to feedback coming from workers on the factory floor? For example about working hours, or pay, or the way the work is structured?
    - Do you feel that this is a harmonious workplace and that there is team spirit? Is it difficult to manage this workplace? Do the staff ever manage themselves, or do you think they could?
    - Do you feel that your company is vulnerable on the global market, and more specifically, if you were a worker on the factory floor would you feel in a vulnerable position?

<u>Worker:</u>

- Tell me more about yourself:
    - Why do you work for this company? How did you get this job? Why are you living in Velddrif or the Western Cape region?
- Tell me more about how you relate to Turqle:

- Have you ever spoken to Turqle or passed on messages to them? What did you say? Did you feel listened to? Was it easy to speak to them?
- What do you feel Turqle does for you? For your company more generally? For South Africa?
- Do you know Rain and Pieter and co at Turqle personally?
- Do you think it matters that you can meet Turqle personally? What if Turqle were based on the other side of the world, say in Britain?

- Tell me more about what it's like to work for your company:
  - How much do people get paid? Does your company pay good wages compared to other companies? Does it offer good benefits apart from wages (for example sick pay, insurance, pension...) Is there a nice working environment?
  - What are the best and most difficult things about your job?
  - Has your wage or work position improved since starting this job? Would you want it to improve further? Do you think it could?
  - Do you think you will ever work in a different job, either within or outside of this company? Do you think it would be easy to get a higher paid job? Do you have a particular plan or dream for the future? (Not that I do myself or know many people who do!)
  - Can you think of a change that has been made in this company as a result of feedback coming from workers on the factory floor? For example about working hours, or pay, or the way the work is done? Have you personally ever asked the managers to change anything?
  - Do you feel that this is a harmonious workplace and that there is team spirit? Before I started this job as a researcher I worked in a co-operatively run cafe back in Britain – we had no bosses but we made all decisions together in weekly meetings, and the management job rotated to a different person every two months. Do you think this place could work like that?
  - Do you ever worry about losing your job? Do you feel that your job or your company is vulnerable on the global market? Do you think or talk about world trade or your position on the world market a lot?
  - (How) do you think racism affects you? Does it affect your job? Is this something you think about every day? What about gender – would your life have been different if you had been another gender? Or if you'd been born in another part of South Africa?
- Tell me more about the training you have (or haven't) done through Turqle:
  - What training have you done? How did it work?
  - Did you like it? Was it useful? What was it useful for?
  - Why did you decide to do (or not do) this training? Have you ever turned

down training or do you know someone who has?

- Have you managed to implement those new skills in your job? Do you think your financial position has improved as a result of this training?
- Do you feel that you are in a stronger position on the job market in general after having this training? If not, is there anything else you immediately think would strengthen your position?
- Was the training free to you – did you do it during working hours or in your spare time? Did you have to pay for books, travel etc?
- Was the training stressful or enjoyable (or both)?
- If you could design your own training programme, what would it include?

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